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**VIETNAM DISPLACED CHILDREN'S
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROJECT**

1998 FINAL PROGRAM EVALUATION

1 APRIL, 1997 THROUGH 30 SEPTEMBER, 1998

Prepared for

**World Concern Development Organization
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Seattle, Washington 98133**

and

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The purpose of evaluation should extend beyond accountability and assessment of the achievement of objectives towards an educational focus for all stockholders the evaluation process needs to enable program participants and beneficiaries to learn more about the project, to assess critically its impact with the broader social, political and cultural context, and to take action leading to personal and social changed.

- Cracknell, (1996), Rugh, (1986, Vargas, (1991) and Whitmore, (1988)

This Evaluation is the result of many peoples' efforts It could not have been completed without the participation of all the project partners, teachers, families, and especially the student and graduates who patiently answered the evaluation questions and shared a bit of their lives

A special note of thanks goes to the dynamic and hard-working World Concern Vietnam staff who were so very generous with their time and patient assistance

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List of Acronyms

ABE	Alternative Basic Education
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CEDC	Children in Extremely Difficult Circumstances
CPCC	Committee for the Protection and Care of Children
DCOF	Displaced Children's and Orphan's Fund
DCP	Displaced Children's Vocational Education Project
DET	Department of Education and Training
DOLISA	Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
GSRV	Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
IGA	Income Generation Activity
IGP	Income Generation Plan
JSC	Job Service Center (previously Vocational Training Center)
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
PC	People's Committee
SWG	Social Work Training Group
TEMC	Center for Nursing and Vocational Training of Orphans
TOT	Training of Trainers
TT	Hoi An Accelerated Teacher's Training Program
VAC	Vuon-ao-chung Vietnamese acronym for orchard, fish pond, pigsty or poultry pens
WCDO	World Concern Development Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

Project Site Acronyms

BT	Binh Thuan	QN	Quang Ngai
HN	Ha Noi	QNDN	Quang Nam Da Nang
HT	Ha Tinh	TB	Thai Binh
NT	Ninh Thuan	TQ	Tuyen Quang
PS	Phuoc Son		

GRANT INFORMATION

Project Title	Vietnam Displaced Children's Vocational Education Project
Agreement No	493-0001-G-00-2379-00
Proposed Activity	Capacity training at vocational training centers, income generation activities (IGAs) as preventative measures and for program sustainability, scholarships and job placement projects to provide marketable job skills and successful integration into the workforce, and capacity building through social work training
Targeted Beneficiaries	396 displaced or at-risk children or their families, future students of vocational schools, the Women's Unions and the Committee for the Protection and Care of Children (CPCC), and the vocational schools and their staff and communities
Original Project Start Date	1 October, 1992
Period of Activity	1 April, 1997 to 30 September, 1998
Project Sites	Ha Tinh, Tuyen Quang, Thai Binh, Quang Nam Da Nang, Quang Ngai, Hien, Ninh Thuan, and Binh Thuan
Life of Grant Funding	\$2,714,319

I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**1 Evaluation Purpose**

This evaluation serves as the final review and assessment of the eighteen-month Displaced Children's Vocational Education Program (the program) which World Concern Development Organization (World Concern) began in April 1, 1997 with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Displaced Children's and Orphan's Fund (DCOF). The program was designed to provide assistance to children in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC) by strengthening and expanding the institutions and organizations, which target such children who are displaced due to economic or social reasons.

The primary purpose of the 1998 Final Program Evaluation (the Evaluation) was to identify ways to improve project effectiveness and build upon past accomplishments during new initiatives to assist adolescents with disabilities (AWD) under the latest 1998 USAID grant. As such, the Evaluation assessed the impact and the progress made towards achieving program goals and objectives, evaluated the effectiveness of project practices, and reviewed the assumptions made regarding strategy, monitoring and sustainability. The Evaluation highlights project strengths, identifies constraints, recommends changes in some activities, and provides recommendations for application in future initiatives under the new grant period. (See attached Appendices 2 through 4 for an overview of the *Evaluation Methodology* utilized, the *List of Project Participants Interviewed* and the *In-Country Evaluation Schedule*, respectively.)

2 World Concern Program Approach

Building upon existing project structures, World Concern has embraced an implementation strategy focused on aiding Vietnamese children who are displaced or at-risk of displacement due to economic or social reasons by strengthening and expanding government and private institutions, organizations and families that provide assistance to CEDC. In promoting successful models in newly emerging site areas, World Concern is continually assessing and refining the models used at their project sites, seeking to ensure their relevancy and effectiveness. Towards this end, World Concern has incorporated pertinent changes to previous vocational training models in their new activities under this grant extension. Efforts were made to decentralize training in order to reach children who are unable to attend training centers or residential schools. Training has focused on activities relevant to the surrounding environment of the children, specifically in agriculture and animal husbandry - skills that are more applicable in their local communities.

Additionally, the program enhanced its monitoring and evaluation components and its approach to job placement development. Unique efforts in income generation activities were implemented at the new project sites in an attempt to

improve their effectiveness as a means for facilitating continued scholarships and sustaining project viability at project partner training centers. The program likewise sought to address the economic problems that often lead to displacement of children by providing credit for income generation activities and the necessary community-based skills training to families with children at-risk of becoming displaced.

During this grant period approximately 175 CEDC received skills training, 56 graduates received job placement support or additional assistance, 274 CEDC received follow-up and life skills training, and 152 families received microcredit assistance (a total of approximately 566 direct beneficiaries¹ were supported, compared to the original goal of 396). Additionally, a very rough estimate of about 3,045 (non-CEDC) fee-paying JSC students and ethnic minority boarding school students were indirectly assisted by having access to new, updated equipment in their vocational skills training. Lastly, 37 project partner staff, 10 community workers, 2 social work interns, and 4 World Concern staff benefited from professional training in their relevant skill areas, (see Appendix 1, *Project Accomplishments from 1 April 1997 through 30 September, 1998*)

3 Overall Findings and Conclusions

3.1 Alternative Livelihood Skills Training

During the grant period World Concern made great strides in re-focusing its approach in vocational skills training for CEDC. Building upon the lessons learned in previous grant periods, World Concern began moving away from more traditional skills and instruction methodologies in the district level job service centers (JSCs, formally known as vocational training centers). Instead, World Concern sought to develop alternative, practical skills training within the communities using participatory training methodologies that more effectively applied to the lives of CEDC. These efforts, which require further examination to determine impact, have progressed relatively well and appear to offer new, creative mechanisms for skills training for this very needy target population.

3.1.1 *The Tuyen Quang and Hien Project Sites*

By consolidating the number of project sites, World Concern was able to more clearly focus on its two new locations in Tuyen Quang, in the north, and in Hien, in the central region. At both sites the majority of vocational training efforts were focused on an animal husbandry and agricultural training curriculum that emphasized direct practice in the field. Although these programs were quite new and require further testing over time, the less quantifiable results indicate that students, teachers, project implementers and families are very enthusiastic and positive about the potential of the project.

Unfortunately, the implementation of the livelihood training was often delayed due to unexpected obstacles along the way, especially in Hien. Overall, the training program was much more effective at the Tuyen Quang site. But Hien, after changes in management personnel, has recently experienced positive results as well. Given the seemingly insurmountable odds that World Concern initially faced at both sites, and the limited time frame in which to fully implement the programs, the projects have done amazingly well and offer an extremely positive potential as training models for future World Concern sites. Issues of importance to be noted are below:

- ♦ The alternative livelihood skills training lacked standardized techniques for measuring skill levels of its graduates. This should be addressed before expanding this model in the current locations or at other project sites.
- ♦ Extending the duration of training and regular follow-up seems to improve CEDC chances of success.
- ♦ Using community workers who live in the local neighborhoods in project implementation has had a very positive effect. This may be because they are more committed to and involved in project outcomes. This focus has improved follow-up, enhanced community support of the project, and increased beneficiary empowerment.
- ♦ A combination of agricultural and livestock inputs as start-up assistance provided to beneficiaries seemed to enhance CEDC opportunities for practice and success. More thorough local market analysis, as well as assessment of the capacity and resources of beneficiaries, should be completed prior to distribution.
- ♦ Gaps in World Concern expatriate and technical staff management negatively affected the projects at both sites, but especially so in Hien. More direct, frequent involvement by World Concern personnel in project management and supervision usually seems to improve the outcomes.

- ♦ Overall project partner support and cooperation again proved critical in project outcomes. Complicated administrative conflicts and power struggles among project partners in Hien led to significant delays, harmful mismanagement, and, ultimately, damaged the impact on beneficiaries and the project as a whole.

3.2 Formal Vocational Skills Training and Job Placement

World Concern focused much of their efforts during this grant on determining the impact of vocational skills training provided during earlier grants in the lives of CEDC. To enhance such monitoring efforts, alternative life skills training and some job placement assistance was provided to previous training graduates. Additionally, indirect support for CEDC was provided via technical assistance and new equipment for formal vocational skills training at the JSCs and the ethnic minority boarding schools. These initiatives also sought to maintain previously established relationships with project partners from the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) and the Department of Education (DET).

3.2.1 The Follow-Up Survey of Graduates

In the past, questions were raised as to the efficacy of targeting CEDC through formal vocational skills training. In an effort to clarify these issues, World Concern and their project partners completed a follow-up survey of graduates from 1995 and 1996 at four of the original project sites. The results provide one of the more quantitative indications to date of vocational training impact on job placement and improving CEDC livelihood.

Unfortunately, the survey findings generally confirm earlier suspicions of low job placement rates and limited change in economic status. Looking at the overall picture, graduates generally had about a fifty-fifty chance of finding a job or a means for generating income one to three years after graduation. Of those who were employed, only an average of 29% were actually using the skills they were trained in, in their work. 73% of those employed worked in sewing factories in the cities far from their homes. Those who did work in factories earned an average of 53% more per month than those who worked in their home villages. Such findings demonstrate that some continuing challenges remain when targeting CEDC via formal vocational skills training. These issues will become even more critical in the development of new training initiatives for AWD under the new grant.

- ♦ Often the skills learned were not applicable in the graduates' home villages where factories were rare and where local markets were already flooded by an excess of laborers with similar skills. Training variation according to market demand, local applicability, and job placement opportunity is extremely limited, especially for CEDC who represent only 5 to 10% of the entire JSC student body.
- ♦ The duration of the training courses also remains too limited, resulting in graduates who often are not sufficiently trained for work in the "real" world, and require further training or an apprenticeship. The relatively low education levels that the majority of CEDC in Vietnam suffer from further exacerbate this situation.
- ♦ The didactic, traditional training methodologies employed at the JSCs may not be as effective in teaching inexperienced, rural, undereducated CEDC. This is particularly important in developing training curriculum for AWD under the new grant.
- ♦ Job placement will be an increasingly difficult factor under the new grant when AWD will need to secure job placement or income generation opportunities for improving their livelihood. Extensive efforts will be needed to develop creative solutions to this challenge.

3.2.2 Follow-Up Workshops for Graduates

One factor that continually seemed to make a difference in the lives of CEDC were those aspects of the project that enhanced the independent living skills and the psycho-social development of the beneficiaries. As told by the graduates themselves, these opportunities, whether directly through life skills training or indirectly through the social aspects of learning together with their peers, enhanced their self-confidence, gave them some independence, and offered them a sense of empowerment in their own lives. Even as the graduates who remained unemployed expressed their continuing frustration with the vocational training that they received, they eagerly discussed the long-lasting, positive impact that the life skills training made on them.

It is important to mention the impact that the life skills workshops also had on project partners. For many there was an obvious change of attitude towards CEDC. In the past, CEDC were viewed as "difficult to teach", "simple-minded" or "incapable" in many aspects of life. The workshops, more than anything else, seemed to make a dent in such attitudes by raising awareness of many project partners and increasing their understanding of the critical issues facing CEDC.

Through these workshops, project partners were introduced to new, more appropriate methods for serving their target beneficiaries. Such efforts, although difficult to measure in quantifiable terms, nevertheless played an important role in World Concern interventions to ensure the sustainability of the projects and to indirectly influence future local initiatives with CEDC. The life skills training workshops should now be expanded in content, frequency and location, with a new focus on AWD.

3.3 Family Support Through Microcredit

World Concern initially began their plan for a microcredit project in Thai Binh province, in cooperation with the district Women's Union. However, after investing substantial staff time and resources, circumstances beyond World Concern's control (the social upheaval in the Thai Binh area as a whole) forced this project to be relocated to a new site. Fortunately, due in large part to the tenacious efforts of World Concern staff and management, the new site location in Tuyen Quang has, thus far, witnessed a level of success. Because of the extensive delays in implementation of this project, however, continued efforts are required in terms of monitoring and follow-up training to determine the full impact of the intervention.

3.3.1 The Cow Bank Project

The Cow Bank project has benefited 152 families thus far, with stable livestock survival rates and high levels of community support characterizing the status of the program. It was evident that project partners believed the Cow Bank was one of the most successful aspects of the World Concern program. In fact, one of the strengths of the program was the strong support it enjoys from the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). Initiated as an income generating mechanism for preventing CEDC displacement, the Cow Bank was modeled after a similar, highly successful project developed by another private voluntary organization (PVO). Additionally, the project partners had previous experience managing such operations. Other factors that may have influenced project outcomes are provided below.

- ♦ Support systems for implementation, training, and monitoring through MOLISA and other PVOs were established at the beginning of the project.
- ♦ The project targets the poorest of the poor, as compared to credit programs through Vietnam's Bank for the Poor, which only targets families who can provide collateral. By providing an alternative, World Concern's project has enhanced its support in the community.
- ♦ Family beneficiaries felt this type of project applied to their lives and was easy to understand and implement.
- ♦ The project gives families a chance to improve their conditions, and with this chance a sense of control over their own lives. With this sense of empowerment comes a sense of project ownership and a commitment to succeed.

The Cow Bank should be expanded as a viable microcredit program for families. It is extremely important to try to involve local people, especially ethnic minorities, in such project administration and implementation. It was also particularly helpful to use local project partners, like the Agriculture Promotion Center (APC) and the CPCC and especially community workers. Such efforts are likely to ensure more effective mutual understanding and cooperation between implementers and beneficiaries, will reduce mistrust, and will enhance community interest and support. For the same reasons, it will be important in the new grant to involve people with disabilities and family members of the disabled in project administration and implementation wherever possible, and to develop working relationships with new local project partners.

3.4 Income Generation for Project Partners

3.4.1 The Original Project Sites: Livestock and New Equipment

The primary goal in developing project partner income generation activities was to increase the number of CEDC scholarships for vocational or livelihood skills training funded independently by the JSCs and ethnic minority schools. Unfortunately, the IGAs based on livestock herds continued to fare poorly and produced only limited income for the JSCs. Although the JSCs did fund the total number of scholarships required by World Concern, there were some questions as to the sustainability of this effort and the efficacy of the type of IGAs that the project partners implemented.

- ♦ Because of poor IGA results, the JSCs must receive supplemental assistance from DOLISA to fund the scholarships. This indicates that scholarship funding may not be sustainable after World Concern's departure.

- ♦ The key to success when using livestock in income generation seems to be 1) the close proximity of project partners to the herds, 2) direct, regular involvement in daily herd management by project partners, 3) commitment to the activity by the project partners, 4) beneficiary responsibility for individual livestock care where possible, and 5), use of the livestock for training practice. These factors all contribute to the usefulness of the livestock beyond the basic income generating purpose.
- ♦ World Concern requires the JSCs to fund only 5 CEDC scholarships, which raises the question of the cost-effectiveness of investing in expensive training equipment if such a limited number of CEDC are supported. In addition, based upon the marginal outcomes from formal vocational training in terms of graduate job placement and income generation, these outlays do not seem justified.
- ♦ Collective management of the income generation projects is very difficult to control. For this reason, it may be more effective to develop an approach that relies in part on individual family care of livestock to ensure more effective herd development. The efficacy of this was demonstrated in Giang and Ha Tinh.

3.4.2 New Income Generation Initiatives for Project Partners in Tuyen Quang and Hien

Under the grant extension, World Concern sought to redevelop its income generation focus for their new project partners. Although these efforts took two very different directions, neither site has demonstrated a significant effect to date. Following typical IGA practices at other DOLISA sites, Tuyen Quang proposed to establish a sewing enterprise at the JSC. Although initially resistant, World Concern did agree with the condition of a signed contract, a DOLISA promise for graduate jobs placement within the enterprise, and pre-developed government labor contracts.

Unfortunately, results-to-date are discouraging because the number of CEDC graduates employed are only half the promised levels and the labor contracts have proven to be only temporary. On the positive side, project partners in Tuyen Quang are still very committed to this enterprise, are very optimistic, and convinced of its efficacy. Even World Concern's rather unique efforts to ensure compliance with job placement goals through pre-signed contracts with their new project partners have failed to achieve the intended results. This is not surprising given the agricultural nature of Vietnam's economy and the current state of economic crisis facing most of Asia.

Income generation initiatives in Hien proved to be the most unique, and potentially most successful, to date. Building on previous experience and positive track records from other PVO development projects, World Concern began a new activity based on the VAC system (Vietnamese acronym for 'vuon-ao-chung' meaning orchard or garden, fishpond, and pigsty or animal pen). This IGA, which has strong government and community support, serves the dual purpose of generating income for the schools and providing students with the opportunity to practice their skills as they learn.

This VAC project initially experienced delays associated with administrative conflicts at the school, which adversely affected the first group of students in that they were denied access to practice opportunities. However, since the resolution of these difficulties, the VAC project has begun to thrive and World Concern has provided supplemental training for the first round of students. The school still suffers from lack of financial resources to recoup agricultural losses experienced during foul weather, but the livestock are doing quite well and the project overall offers much potential. The VAC system should be repeated at other project sites even though it has not been fully proven in Hien. The effectiveness of the VAC system has been demonstrated time and again in other PVO programs. The VAC system will be especially helpful at sites where agriculture and animal husbandry training, or a microcredit program like the Cow Bank, has been implemented or where practice is part of the curriculum requirement.

3.5 Professional Training and Development

During this grant, World Concern has taken determined steps to respond to lessons of the past by developing a progressive, more comprehensive professional training and capacity building approach in their projects. As such, they have expanded previous training efforts in an attempt to affect change in social service delivery for CEDC across a wide selection of project partners. World Concern was well-rewarded for their steady efforts; the training component was one of the most successful of the entire project.

3.5.1 Capacity Building in Social Work Education

World Concern focused its efforts on supporting the development of social work education through the Hanoi-based Social Work Training Group (SWG) as a mechanism for enhancing overall social service delivery in Vietnam. World Concern played a key role as an organizer and leader in initiating and expanding PVO support for the SWTG.

Additionally, World Concern offered support through technical expertise and field work opportunities for two SWTG interns. By supporting the training of future social work trainers in skills that enhance their ability to train community workers, social service delivery personnel, other trainers, and project partners, World Concern directly influenced long-term capacity building at the national, district and local levels. Such efforts have resulted in some of the most significant project impacts.

World Concern's interns from the SWTG, whose benefits to the project were initially untested, proved their worth and effectiveness beyond a doubt by the end of the grant. The internships were highly successful in a number of ways. First, by bringing together project partners from different sites, including them in the training implementation, and providing an opportunity for them to work directly with CEDC, the social work team achieved an important measure of success: they managed to build bridges of trust and understanding between project partners and World Concern as a foreign PVO. Second, the social work interns provide a cost-effective means for enhancing World Concern's training initiatives for project partner capacity-building. It will be especially important to utilize this mutually beneficial relationship as the training needs of World Concern staff and their project partners continue to expand under the new grant and as the demands on the current World Concern trainer become far too overwhelming.

3.5.2 Capacity Building for Project Partner Staff

Training for project partners was an outgrowth of the training program for the social work interns, building upon the expanding training expertise of the interns in developing the skills of the project partners. In addition to the obvious purpose of expanding the social service delivery skills of project partners, this training was intended to serve as a catalyst for the development of regular forums in life skills training for students at the JSCs. Training-of-trainers (TOT) for project partners created a unique cooperative mechanism to work together, to learn more about social service delivery, to enhance the human aspects of their work, and to become more involved in the projects. Project partner training had a demonstrated effect on project partner participants in terms of change in attitudes towards CEDC, change in teaching methodologies used with CEDC, increase in creative problem-solving initiatives, and a reaffirmation of personal interest in and commitment to the project. Training in participatory methodologies, life skills, basic social work theory, and techniques for working directly with CEDC and their communities should be repeated and expanded under the new grant to include disability awareness and community-based rehabilitation (CBR) training.

3.6 Project Management and Institutional Capacity

3.6.1 World Concern's Human Resource Capacity

Two major staffing issues at World Concern significantly impacted project implementation and management continuity during this grant period. The first was the 12-month vacancy in the expatriate project coordinator position in Da Nang for the central project sites, and the second was the sudden departure of World Concern's newly hired local-national agricultural/veterinary specialist. As a result, training in and oversight of the livestock and agriculture projects, as well as technical assistance, was affected, particularly at the new project sites. Additionally, the absence of consistent World Concern management presence at many sites negatively influenced relationship-building with project partners and monitoring of project status. If World Concern personnel had been available, they may have foreseen some of the troubles brewing with their project partners in Hien and could have intervened sooner. Likewise, the curriculum problems with student training and the VAC system would more likely have been identified earlier had there been a continual management presence.

3.6.2 Support and Cooperation of Project Partners

The program experienced two specific events involving project partners that disrupted or significantly delayed activities during this grant period, one at the overall provincial level and the other on a very direct project level. In the first instance, the World Concern program was one of many PVO victims in Thai Binh province when villagers began a large-scale protest against the local People's Committee and the government authorities. In the second instance, World Concern experienced major problems in Hien with the purported corruption involving their project partner, the principal of the Ethnic Minority Boarding School. Such project partner issues resulted in the complete halt of the Thai Binh activities and created delays, mistrust, suspicion, staff headaches, much reinvestment of effort, and redirection of funds, in Hien.

With this in mind, it is important to note the significance of building project partner capacity to ensure project expansion and sustainability. As World Concern knows from many lessons past, building a long-lasting human resource base with project partners is perhaps one of their most challenging and important tasks. It presents the most significant way in

which the project's vision is interpreted and applied. Factors affecting project partner support and cooperation are included below.

- ♦ In Vietnam, the combination of socialist and traditional, patriarchal (Confucian) philosophies affect the general approach currently being applied in the delivery of social services and in the development of national policy in Vietnam. In part because of this, few project partners view their mandate as an opportunity to empower beneficiaries and assist them in achieving a level of self-reliance.
- ♦ Lack of shared commitment by project partners towards project objectives and the target beneficiaries, World Concern's planning, implementation and evaluation practices are not always effective at including project partners.
- ♦ Project partner hiring practices often focus on those who have proven, "politically correct" track records, connections to the appropriate officials, or influential family members. This makes it difficult to find qualified, committed project partner staff.
- ♦ Sudden, unexpected changes provincial boundaries. In such situations, provinces are unexpectedly divided into two, causing the sudden reorganization of provincial and district governments, maddening halts in administrative processes, impromptu scrambling for the reallocation of scarce human and physical resources, and generally resulting in temporary, but extremely disruptive, government shutdowns.
- ♦ World Concern seemingly has no flexibility in changing its project partner sponsorship from MOLISA to another, perhaps more appropriate, Ministry such as MOET (Ministry of Education and Training) or PACCOM (the People's Aid Coordination Committee). This mandatory relationship means that World Concern is required to work in MOLISA-approved provinces, with MOLISA-determined staff and managers, and on specific MOLISA-sanctioned project focus and beneficiaries.
- ♦ Inter-Ministry and interagency cooperation or shared project ownership in Vietnam is extremely complex and troublesome for PVOs, in part because it requires shared responsibility of project partners and thus exposes one governmental agency to potential criticism from the other. Ultimately, this creates extremely perplexing administrative and implementation problems for World Concern's community-based projects because MOLISA does not operate at the commune level.

3.7 Continuing Support of Past Projects

3.7.1 *Project Monitoring and Follow-Up*

World Concern made concerted efforts during the grant period to improve their monitoring and follow-up approach. This was accomplished largely by completing follow-up training, needs assessments, graduate follow-up surveys, technical evaluations, regular site visits, and by consolidating project sites. Overall, these efforts were successful, especially in that they provided valuable opportunities for World Concern to learn from experience what works and what doesn't.

One lesson learned was that project partners were not as involved in the planning, design and evaluation aspects of the projects as they should have been. Where project partners were included in hands-on, participatory ways from the beginning, World Concern was better able to ensure they understood the project objectives, were involved in its design, were a part of what made it happen, and had a stake in the outcomes. Although these efforts are more challenging at the provincial and district levels, they will likely prove to be critical at the local level where such involvement can represent the difference between success and failure.

The most notable lesson learned, however, was the importance of regular monitoring of project efforts and outcomes. Although these initiatives had a successful beginning, there is cause for concern in that the new projects are now at the stage where monitoring and evaluation become critical. Unfortunately, the grant period ended before any impact of the new project endeavors could effectively be experienced, let alone assessed. Especially at the Tuyen Quang and Hien sites, and with the Hoi An Accelerated Teacher's Training Program, World Concern has established unique initiatives which require continued monitoring and follow-up. This is particularly important with the VAC system for income generation, the microcredit Cow Bank project for families, and the community-based agricultural and animal husbandry training. There are crucial lessons to be learned in monitoring these projects which will apply directly in the initiatives of the new grant, especially as they relate to its community-based aspects.

On a final note here, it should be mentioned that USAID's 18-month DCOF project deadlines and related reporting requirements are extremely ambitious. Often this means that DCOF funding recipients in Vietnam have great difficulties effectively completing project implementation according to schedule. Additionally, the process for securing continuing USAID funding beyond the 18-month activity period is uncertain and diverts an immense amount of staff time from project activities to grant writing and research. Because of this, World Concern may need to reassess project implementation objectives to more suitably fit within the DCOF deadlines. This could require a reduction in the number and/or scope of expected project outcomes and will likely require a more realistic consideration of implementation schedules.

II EVALUATION INTRODUCTION

1 The Project Context

In considering this Evaluation it is important to examine first the socio-economic conditions which may affect the lives of the target beneficiaries. Such an examination indicates that rapid development and economic growth in Vietnam since 1989 directly impact the situation of the youngest members of society. This is especially true for CEDC, including rural, poor, minority and displaced children.

The first half of the 1990s in Vietnam brought about one of the highest levels of uninterrupted growth in the country's modern history. The government's policy of 'doi moi' (renovation) has taken hold in most aspects of Vietnamese life. As reported by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam (GSO),² the economy grew rapidly from 1991 through 1995, with GDP growth at 8.2% and food production 28.3% higher than in 1990. In line with overall improvements in the national economy, the living standards of many segments of society also improved. For example, the percentage of poor households was reduced from 55% in 1989 to 17.8% in 1994.³

Unfortunately, a critical side effect of the rapid movement towards industrialization and modernization has been an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. The shift from a command (centrally planned) to a market-based economy has eroded, or in many cases halted, the provision of certain social services and subsidies in aid of the poor. Total government funding did not meet nationwide needs, especially in rural areas where living standards were still low and community awareness was limited. Children from rural, poor and minority areas in particular suffer from severe social and economic marginalization due to these adverse affects.

For example, although the number of children per household overall has dropped, in rural areas the number of children from 0 to 15 years of age in households is 74% higher than in urban areas.⁴ Even so, the GSO reports that the overall proportion of budget expenditure for the protection and care of children was only approximately half the expenditure in rural areas (3.86%) as it was in the cities where industrialization and modernization flourish (6.45%). Of the amount spent in rural areas, only .09% is designated for CEDC specifically.⁵

Large families, which are more common in rural, poor areas, still face an inadequate and irregular food supply as well as high dropout rates from school. The number of older children (above 14 years) who have completed grade 3 is only 74.5% in poor households and 79.3% in remote or isolated areas. This compares to 93.9% in rich homes and 96.3% in urban areas.⁶

Children from such extremely difficult circumstances often drift towards urban centers, unskilled and unemployable, searching for a means to support themselves or their families and hoping to make a better life. Unfortunately, they face huge obstacles - in particular, the rapidly expanding chasm between the have and have-nots, and a cycle of poverty which transcends generation after generation.

2 The World Concern Response

In order to address these particular issues, World Concern has focused its efforts in the areas of vocational education and provision of basic needs support to children who are displaced from their families or at-risk of displacement. Since October 1992, World Concern has successfully implemented such programs at eleven sites in six provinces of Vietnam. The project sites included public and private vocational training centers (now called job service centers), and social protection centers (SPCs). In partnership with the respective ministries of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (GSRV), the program has benefited more than 1,000 displaced or orphaned children, including minority children from the central highlands in Vietnam.⁷

By April 1997, approximately 820 children were trained in specific trades, which have helped them to improve their financial situations and contribute to the support of their families. World Concern has completed its major involvement in the vocational training programs at the JSCs, the Thai Binh TEMC (the Center for Nursing and Vocational Training of Homeless Orphans), the minority schools in Giang and Phuoc Son, and the SPCs. The second stage of the program, under the grant extension being evaluated here, attempted to further the gains made during the first four and a half years by providing technical and financial job-placement support for CEDC scholarship students funded independently by the JSCs. The program also offered professional technical assistance for livestock income generation activities. Such efforts enabled World Concern to maintain an on-going monitoring and supportive role in order to assess the program's effectiveness over time.⁸

3 Evaluation Terms of Reference

World Concern selected an independent, external consultant to conduct the Evaluation. The Consultant was especially familiar with the project in Vietnam due to previous work completed for World Concern, specifically the Mid-Term Evaluation finalized in March, 1997. The Consultant also possessed a well-developed understanding of the dynamics involved in implementing aid projects in Vietnam and relevant in-country experience working with PVOs. These PVOs had all received support from USAID for their programs to assist CEDC under the DCOF Program. In this way the Consultant had an additional understanding and knowledge of World Concern's USAID responsibilities.

The primary purpose of the Evaluation was to determine project effectiveness as it directly related to World Concern's accomplishments of the USAID project goals. In specific, there were four objectives that informed the approach used in the Evaluation and helped to focus the observations and inquiries. These objectives were:

- ♦ Review of the formal and community-based vocational and livelihood skills training programs, through the specific case examples of the Hien and Tuyen Quang project sites,
- ♦ Analysis of the income generation activities of the CEDC, their families and the Job Service Centers, including the Cattle Bank, the VAC system and other agricultural in-kind loans,
- ♦ Assessment of graduate job placement results, and
- ♦ Evaluation of the social work training program in terms of local capacity building

Because the first objective outlined above involved the assessment of two types of vocational training, (e.g. formal instruction in specific trade skills at centralized locations versus informal training in agriculture and animal husbandry directly in the communities), two separate reporting sections were made part of the Evaluation format. The first, in Section III, is entitled *Alternative Livelihood Skills Training* and the second, in Section IV, is *Formal Vocational Skills Training and Job Placement*. An overview of the specific techniques used in the assessment and analysis of the project objectives is provided in attached Appendix 2, *Evaluation Methodology*.

III EVALUATION FINDINGS *ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD SKILLS TRAINING*

1 Overall Objectives

During this grant period World Concern expanded its efforts in vocational skill development at their two new project sites in Tuyen Quang in the northern highlands, and in Hien in the central highlands near the Laos border. However, at these sites the primary emphasis on skill education revolved around community-based training in agriculture and animal husbandry. Formal vocational skills training was provided at the Tuyen Quang JSC for some students, although this aspect of training represented a relatively small component of World Concern's efforts. (To learn more about the formal vocational skills training at the Tuyen Quang JSC please see Section IV, on page 15.)

In addition, World Concern developed income generation projects at both the Tuyen Quang JSC and Hien's school for ethnic minorities. Although the IGA at Tuyen Quang's JSC generally followed the same approach used at other JSCs to provide equipment to sustain vocational training, the initiatives in Hien were new and imaginative. Following the experiences of many PVOs in Vietnam, World Concern implemented its first VAC system to generate income for the school. Even though it initially experienced numerous difficulties generally unrelated to the actual project activities, under

the new management in Hien it seems offer a great potential to expand the options available for generating sustainable in-kind and financial support at the school

Objective 1 Vocational and livelihood skills training to improve economic conditions of CEDC

Activities	Intended Results	Benchmarks	Time Frame
50 CEDC in TQ and 70 in Hien complete skills training	increased skill levels, access to employment, improved earning capacity, develop IGA plans	students selected/curriculum developed/TOT complete (TQ), 30 students complete summer course (Hien), 70% students implement IGA plans	by end 2 nd quarter, end grant period
IGAs developed for TQ JSC, VAC system for Hien school	financial program sustainability	IGAs/VAC system approved & implementation started, income of \$750-1,000 generated	by end 2 nd quarter end grant period
equipment needs assessed by survey & equipment provided	financial program sustainability	survey complete (TQ), equipment delivered (Hien)	unspecified

2 Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Training

To date, the *community-based training efforts have been much more positively received and generally successful than the traditional methods for vocational instruction*. This seems to be due to the fact that the courses can be applied to the target beneficiary's daily living activities and are in keeping with their educational levels, background experience and general knowledge. Additionally, the practice opportunities are more appropriate for the CEDC, as are the chances of successfully generating income with the start-up inputs provided through World Concern. At both new sites, the community-based training project experienced many hurdles, some more significant than others. However, although these programs are quite new and relatively untested over time, the less quantifiable results appear to indicate that *students, teachers, project implementers and families alike are more enthusiastic and positive about the potential of the project*. Although certainly not always a sure thing, positive attitude, enthusiasm and feelings of ownership go a long way towards ensuring greater project success.

2.1 General Overview of Alternative Livelihood Skills Training How Does It Work?

The agricultural and animal husbandry training projects in Tuyen Quang and Hien were founded on a community-based model which utilizes previous experiences, local resources and capabilities of the families of the target beneficiaries and local-level project partners in the village. There were slight variations on the overall theme at each site, but in general the projects followed the same model. As one of the project coordinators from the APC in Tuyen Quang explained, for the project partners the primary goal of the training program was the re-integration and self-sufficiency of CEDC in their local communities.

The project depends on direct family involvement and requires the instructors to work directly with the students in their communities to train them in animal husbandry and agriculture techniques, as distinct from traditional vocational skills training at a central location. Although some group training was completed at the People's Committee community centers in the communes at regular intervals during the life of the project, the bulk of the training was actually informal, done on a one-on-one follow-up basis directly with the families.

Before the project was implemented, all project coordinators and community workers received training-of-trainers from the World Concern agricultural specialist. Under the management of DOLISA or the DET and the CPCC, project coordinators with specialties in forestry, agriculture, animal husbandry and veterinarian skills from the APC and, in Hien, the District Agricultural and Veterinary Station provided the group training. Next, after the students each received appropriate plant and/or animal inputs from World Concern, community extension workers who live in the neighborhood completed daily follow-up training and monitoring at each home. The project director and the project coordinators also completed monitoring and follow-up about once a month, excluding emergencies.

2.2 Training Results

A total of 161 CEDC (76 in Tuyen Quang and 85 in Hien) completed agricultural and animal husbandry training. With the addition of 12 CEDC trained through formal vocational skills training at the Tuyen Quang JSC, the total number of CEDC assisted is 175, or 55 more students (44% higher) than the number originally planned by World Concern. These results are very positive. At both sites, project partners expressed their emphatic approval of alternative livelihood skills training and their hopes to expand it to other needy CEDC in their communities.

Training in Hien was held as a three-month summer course. *In the first round of training in 1997, students spent the majority of their time learning theory and little time developing their hands-on, practical skills.* The results were generally very poor, as explained in subsection 2.2.5 below, but some follow-up training was provided by World Concern's agricultural specialist which did help improve their situation somewhat.

The next batch of summer students had a much more well-rounded experience and opportunity to learn a combination of theory and practice. *The 1998 students greatly benefited from a change of instructor and the addition of experts from the local Agricultural Station to assist in their skill development.*

Training in Tuyen Quang, which strongly emphasized practice and employed a community-based approach, was much more effective than in Hien. There were a total of 10 training workshops, held monthly beginning in November 1997, which were divided into three stages. In the first stage, students participated in more formal training with the introduction of course materials and general lessons on animal husbandry and agricultural techniques. In the second stage, the materials were reviewed again, this time using very informal, hands-on techniques in the commune fields and in the homes of local farmers who offered their expertise to the students. In the last phase the students did a final review of their skills and honed their knowledge. This final review served as the only formal mechanism for determining the students' knowledge and skill levels from the training.

Even though World Concern staff discovered that the students in the Tuyen Quang program were much less educated and lacked more life skills than in all other site locations, the project has had more success than in Hien. There are many possible answers for this. First, Tuyen Quang did not experience the type of delays that Hien did as a result of administrative power struggles. Second, Tuyen Quang implemented a course, which lasted 10 months rather than 3 months, and used a curriculum that placed heavy emphasis on practical training rather than theory. Additionally, the training structure was much more community-centered and participatory than it was in Hien. Third, the project in Tuyen Quang depended upon community workers who actually had been born and raised in the villages and therefore generally felt a strong sense of commitment and responsibility to their communities to make the project successful. This compares to Hien, where most project implementers were not only transplants from the city who were assigned to complete government contracts, but did not belong to the ethnic minority group for which the project was being administered. And lastly, Tuyen Quang enjoyed the benefit of not only World Concern project officers to monitor their efforts, but also the regular presence of an expatriate manager. In Hien, the long vacancy in World Concern's expatriate project manager position left a critical void that set them even further behind.

2.2.1 Determining Skill Levels of Graduates

Although the training results seem to be very positive for the Tuyen Quang graduates and at least fair for the second group of Hien graduates, there was no clear pre- and post-testing mechanism established prior to beginning the training. Generally, the trainers simply graded the students on their theoretical and practical skills. Since there are no set national standards for these unique vocational training skills, there was no way to measure these results against other sites or programs. *The lack of standardized techniques for measuring skill levels is a problem in the current program that should be addressed before implementing similar models elsewhere.*

However, the qualitative results are very positive especially in that project partners and members of the community are pleased with the results and believe it is a good model to use elsewhere. For example, after more than 6 months since the first students graduated in Tuyen Quang they are doing quite well with their agricultural and livestock projects and only a few have had poor results.

2.2.2 Technical Assistance

Both new project sites suffered from difficulties resulting from management issues at World Concern. As outlined in Section VIII, subsection 2.2, on page 32, *the lack of an agricultural specialist on site added to the delays in the training*

projects and negatively impacted monitoring and follow-up of the start-up income generation projects for families In addition, *the vacancy in the expatriate project manager position in Da Nang complicated this situation* This especially affected Hien Because World Concern lacked a continuous presence at the sites, project officers had to travel from Hanoi or Da Nang to manage the sites which proved to be unrealistic and inadequate, although greater success comparatively was experienced in Tuyen Quang

2 2 3 *Dependence on Community Workers for Project Success*

The agricultural training project, as well as the Cow Bank, is extremely dependent on the continuing interest of the community workers This can have both a positive and negative side Nowhere is this more evident than in a result comparison between Hien and Tuyen Quang On the positive side, the attitudes and enthusiasm of the project implementers in Tuyen Quang, especially those working directly in the communities, are extremely positive and encouraging The coordinators and community workers explained that they view their work as going well beyond simply teaching They see their job as encouraging the family to become directly involved in the training of their children *The immediate involvement of the community workers, and the fact that they live in the communes, means that they are much more likely to possess necessary ownership of the project and to desire to see their efforts succeed* This has been a very positive aspect of the Tuyen Quang project

However, *on the down side is the ever-present concern that low wages, poor working conditions, disinterest, personal opinion or biases, or desire for personal gain may influence the work being done against the interests of some or many of the beneficiaries* World Concern is familiar with the impact that corruption, ignorance, and basic lack of interest can have on project implementation and results The best examples of this are found in World Concern's projects in Thai Binh and, more recently, in Hien where the difficulties encountered with the principal of the minority school delayed the project for months

It is important to point out that currently there are no signs at all of such problems in the community-based training program in Tuyen Quang, but there may be some on-going concern of this in Hien *If we follow the model developed in Tuyen Quang, we may see that this new training methodology offers an exciting alternative to traditional skill training which should be watched closely for its potential as a model in other World Concern projects* At the same time, care should be used to ensure that monitoring is more direct and recurrent than in other World Concern projects, especially in trouble spots like Hien In fact, even one of Tuyen Quang's provincial coordinators, when asked what should be done to strengthen the program, emphasized the need for enhanced project follow-up, not necessarily requiring more people, but rather requiring clearer, more logical planning (See Section VIII, subsection 3, page 33 for a more detailed analysis of project partner support and cooperation)

2 2 4 *Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Inputs for Student Practice*

A key component of the community-based training was the distribution of agricultural and livestock inputs by World Concern after the initial group trainings were completed These inputs served the dual purpose of providing students with the mechanisms for applying and practicing their new skills as they learn, and offering a means for the students to generate income for their families

The results of this component were mixed, with the first class of students from Hien faring the worst (see subsection 2 2 5 below) The first class of Hien students experienced a very high rate of failure with the inputs they received In terms of before and after status, these graduates were back to their initial situations before training began As explained below, the first group of Hien students was doomed from the start, given the obstacles that faced them in their training However, with the second group of students at Hien the results had improved somewhat, and in Tuyen Quang graduates were experiencing a fair measure of success

At the insistence of World Concern, the students in Tuyen Quang were given both agricultural and livestock inputs on the basis that the trees would serve as the long-term income generating component and the animals would constitute the short-term component This decision was largely based on the lesson learned in Hien In Tuyen Quang most students got two pigs and longan, persimmon and litchi trees, while in Hien the second training group generally received only chickens (although these chickens were different from those the first group received, being older, hardier and of local breed) In Tuyen Quang the type and number of animals or trees provided depended upon the availability of land and the capacity of the family to use the inputs Community workers explained that they chose pigs as the animals for the students because other animals were more susceptible to diseases, required more time for maintenance, and required resources which local people didn't have

In both sites the livestock has done quite well, although Tuyen Quang has had much better success overall. It is difficult to determine exact reasons for the variation in success rates at the two sites. If we focus on the difficulties that Hien faced in their project implementation phase, outlined below, there certainly exists a basis for some understanding. However, it may be more constructive to instead emphasize the effective techniques that Tuyen Quang utilized. At this site, implementation was delayed by bureaucratic stalling on the part of DOLISA and glitches in World Concern management too, but the results were much more positive. An explanation may be found in considering the widespread community support and interest in the communes, in conjunction with the commitment of the local project partners (the community workers in particular). Comparatively, in Hien the community workers were Kinh majority, rather than of the ethnic Ka Tu minority as the beneficiaries were. This is a common problem in project development for ethnic peoples in Vietnam. If project implementation was not participatory, if it failed to ensure empowerment, or if any mistrust existed between beneficiaries and their families and the project partners, the chances of its success would have been less likely to occur.

2.2.5 Review of the Troubles in Hien

One of the poorest project results was with the first group of students in Hien in the agricultural and animal husbandry training. In this case, the school principal had a relatively unbalanced share of individual power in the project, which caused a struggle for control, especially over World Concern funds. *The lingering effect of this struggle seriously reduced the impact at the Hien site.*

World Concern began its new project in Hien very smoothly, with a thorough assessment, proposal and well-developed action plan completed by the School's rather dynamic principal. Agreements to proceed were signed in April 1997. Based on these strategies, World Concern transferred the funds in June 1997 and the principal began implementing each project component in the 1st quarter. Although it didn't become obvious until much later, the first indication of trouble became apparent early on when the training start date was delayed due to the supposed failure of the DET in transferring operational funds to the School.

Although the course eventually did proceed in mid-June 1997, it wasn't until late July that World Concern began to realize the extent of the problems between the principal and the district DET. Even though funding had been sent by World Concern, the School and the teachers had not received the operational funds, including salaries. It became evident that the money had been transferred by DET but was being held at the Hien treasury by local authorities in response to suspected corruption by the principal.

Unfortunately, it wasn't until late September 1997 that World Concern discovered the principal had failed to provide the proper funding documentation to local authorities, which caused the intense scrutiny of her actions. This may or may not have been an issue of corruption, but it certainly involved poor management practices for which she was correctly held culpable. *Furthermore, it was only revealed during the Evaluation that the primary reason for the project's stagnation and the intense secrecy of the investigation was directly related to the fact that the principal was the spouse of a very powerful authority in the local People's Committee. To avoid any political damage, and in large part to "save face", the DET and the CPCC wanted to proceed with extreme caution in the removal of the principal.*

Unfortunately, the 1997 summer students were the ultimate victims of this suspected corruption and mismanagement on the part of the School, and suffered a litany of setbacks in their training experience. To begin, these students had very low levels of education but were subjected to a teacher who insisted upon a college-level curriculum based on theory rather than practice. In fact, the students had virtually no opportunity to practice their skills given the lack of an appropriate trainer and the added complication that there was nothing to practice with. Since the funds for purchasing inputs for the VAC system were frozen, everything that depended on this component was delayed. (Based on interviews, it seems that the only training offered was related to animal husbandry.)

In a final blow, when livestock inputs were finally distributed to the students, the majority received an unfamiliar breed of chickens that were very young and small. *With limited practical skills, no support, and terrible weather conditions, almost all of the students' inputs (25 each) died very soon after distribution. Currently, most of the 1997 students are back to their original status with few options and limited hope of emerging from their poverty* (see Appendix 5, *Beneficiary Case Studies*). Most have returned to farming. Even though research indicated that chickens have an extremely high susceptibility to disease and that pigs or cows were much preferred over chickens⁹, the decision was made to provide the latter. Part of the reason that pigs were not provided was due to a fear on the part of the neighbors (who all

had pigs) of an infectious disease which they did not want introduced to the area. It should be noted here that at least two Kinh children (the majority race) in the program did receive pigs. They were the only two during the evaluation visits whose lives had improved from the income generated in their projects (in fact, they had both gone back for additional training and had been able to send their siblings to school with the money they generated from the IGAs). No explanation was provided as to why these children were permitted to have pigs while the Ka Tu minority children were not.

World Concern attempted to rectify the situation of the 1997 students with the assistance of Hien's CPCC and the Agricultural Station by offering the students extra follow-up training with World Concern specialists. However, it seems that perhaps this was not effective and/or too late. In fact, the new management at the School reported that they don't even follow-up with the students from the first course because they were all under the administration of the initial School principal and are not considered part of the new program.

3 Income Generation at the New Project Sites

3.1 Income Generation at the Tuyen Quang Job Service Center

The income generation activities in Tuyen Quang were generally based on the model used at the original project sites, but did contain a slightly varied focus. Previous experience suggested that the methods used by the JSCs to generate income using high-cost equipment did not necessarily have positive results. Because of this, World Concern was understandably hesitant when proposals initially submitted by Tuyen Quang DOLISA suggested more of the same. Although delays were incurred during negotiations on an agreeable income generation plan, eventually World Concern agreed to support their initiative to develop a small industrial sewing production line to generate income. This enterprise proposed to serve the dual purpose of generating income so the Center could fund more CEDC scholarships and cover the cost of consumables, and would supposedly provide job placements for CEDC graduates.

Unfortunately, as discussed in Section IV, subsection 2.1.2, on page 18, *the results of this IGA have not proven to be highly effective*. Although the JSC has some more grace period before a true examination of their income generation efforts can be analyzed thoroughly, initial results do not appear to have a positive outlook. A clearer analysis of the income generation activities and the outcomes of providing equipment at the job service centers in general can be found in Section VI, beginning on page 25.

3.2 The VAC System at Hien Minority School

The VAC system has the benefit of enjoying widespread support from the Vietnamese Government. Currently, *77% of all communes in the country have implemented the VAC model*. In fact, the GSO¹⁰ touts its many contributions to changing the economic structure of rural areas and changing agricultural practices. Furthermore, the government seeks to ensure that half the families in Vietnam implement the VAC system by the year 2000. It reports that the VAC system has boosted household production and incomes and has improved nutrition for families and children. Additionally, it increases the availability of diverse, nutritious and inexpensive foods at the local level.

Expanding this notion of the VAC system for families, World Concern adapted the model for use at the Hien District Ethnic Minorities Boarding School (attended primarily by Ka Tu ethnic minorities). Hien began this project at the end of the first quarter, which *served the dual purpose of generating income for the school and providing the students with opportunities to practice their skills* during their training in agriculture and animal husbandry. The School developed a plan to plant fruit trees, including banana, papaya and persimmon, to raise pigs, chicken and ducks and to cultivate fish. World Concern correspondingly provided at least 170 trees, 200 ducks, 200 chickens, 400 fish, 40 pigs, 5 sows, and the funds for VAC infrastructure development, medicine, feed and supplies to the School (see Appendix 1).

3.2.1 VAC Project Results

Unfortunately, the initial implementation was wrought with troubles. Although some preparatory work was completed at the beginning, *the project stalled until the end of the third quarter due to conflicts in financial and administrative management* between the School's principal and the DET. In addition to the management problems facing their partners, *World Concern experienced their own troubles with the local agricultural specialist* who was hired and then disappeared just as the project was getting back on its feet. (Details of these problems are contained on page 31, Section VIII, subsection 2.) Adding to these woes, once the project finally did get going, *flooding and heavy rains in one season coupled with drought in another caused much destruction* of the trees and the deaths of many of the chickens and ducks.

All this said and done, it needs to be reported that the current state of the project has generally greatly improved Once the appropriate shelters were completed and specialists from World Concern and the District Agricultural and Veterinary Station became involved the animals began to thrive. They have a rather large number of pigs, (33 from an original 40) that all appear to be healthy and are growing. The number of ducks dwindled from the original 200 to 35 and chickens from 200 to 67, but according to the new expatriate staff with animal husbandry skills, such numbers are more appropriate for the amount of space and the type of shelter available at the school. There wasn't much opportunity to explore the status of the fish, but reports indicate that they are fine. In attempting to adhere to World Concern's requests, the School built a fresh flow of water for the pond, although they didn't seem to understand the importance of making it a cyclical system that introduces oxygen into water to prevent stagnation.

One of the most disappointing results was a 67% loss of the 120 fruit trees originally provided in the VAC system. The School has replaced some of the banana trees, but still the new young trees languish in soil that appears to be too poor to sustain a simple garden. The persimmon trees, which offer long-term, more profitable production rates, seem to have been put on hold in terms of replacement (they are said to be too expensive to replace). The School views banana trees as more valuable to them because of their short-term, 'quick-fix' income generating capacity. This outlook, while understandable, is a relatively narrow approach, and represents one of the difficulties with project partner cooperation and implementation in Vietnam.

3.2.2 VAC Project Impact

This slow beginning directly impacted the capacity of the School to generate income to sustain the summer courses for CEDC. As might be expected, *there were no sales of animals and certainly no fruit produced.* Now that the project in Hien has effectively come to an end, there is no clear mechanism for determining what outcomes will evolve from the VAC model. Suffice it to say, although the best location for implementation of the VAC project perhaps was not Hien, the model is a sound one which has widespread success and support in other PVO projects and should not be ruled out as a potentially beneficial income generation activity just yet.

Also affected were the CEDC students from the initial summer agricultural and animal husbandry training course in 1997. *Because the VAC system had not been developed, the students had no opportunity to practice their skills.* Rather, they were the ones who effectively did the hard labor to prepare for the VAC system without actually benefiting from it. That is, they dug the fishpond and the sewage ditch and the holes for the trees. The only training they actually completed was in theory. This factor was one of the main reasons the 1997 Hien students did so poorly in their final results and why their start-up projects fared so poorly. Although World Concern did attempt to re-train the 1997 students in a short-term follow-up training, it was effectively too little, too late.

IV EVALUATION FINDINGS FORMAL VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT

1 General Findings The Job Service Centers

There are some continuing challenges associated with targeting CEDC through national vocational training programs. The primary mandate of the centralized DOLISA JSCs is to provide vocational training for fee-paying students. The centers are not necessarily in business to assist CEDC, although with the involvement of World Concern it has become a small component of their mandate. *In fact, the average number of CEDC out of the total JSC population is only around 5% or 10%* (usually a maximum of 25 CEDC in a general student body of 350 to 400 per training year).

1.1 Training Methods and Skill Variation

Under the nationwide direction of MOLISA, the district-level JSCs construct their vocational training curriculum around a *relatively narrow number of skill choices primarily aimed at the needs of their fee-paying constituency.* The Vietnamese educational system in general and the vocational training programs in specific have traditionally focused on *formal, didactic teaching methodologies.* Skills offered to CEDC typically focus on domestic and industrial sewing, motorbike repair, electricity, and in some rare cases, computers or driving. The majority of JSC students learn sewing skills. *Training variation according to market demand, local applicability, and job placement opportunity is extremely limited,* even for the general student body. In response to this narrow focus and limited relevance, during this grant-extension period World Concern implemented a vocational training component which offered alternative skill choices and new methods for community-based instruction to CEDC. This component has been one of the strengths of the current program.

1.2 Length of Training Courses

The length of the training courses for CEDC also continues to be an issue. *There are no uniform standards as to course length at the JSCs.* Currently, courses last anywhere from 2 to 9 months (2 months for motorbike repair and 4 months for electricity in Quang Ngai, 6 months for sewing in Ninh Thuan, 7 months for sewing in Tuyen Quang, etc.) The lack of uniformity makes it extremely difficult to effectively monitor the actual results of World Concern project success.

More importantly, lessons learned in past program analysis clearly indicated the problems associated with the short length of the classes. In such lessons it was evident that the JSCs often wanted to exclude disadvantaged children with low educational levels in order to ensure better examination results. They knew their 6-month courses only allowed for training in basic methodology and practice, which was not sufficient for CEDC with low education levels. World Concern had responded to this problem by requiring training for CEDC to be longer, and in some cases repeated or supplemented with Alternative Basic Education (ABE) classes. Since World Concern has more recently limited its involvement with the original JSCs, however, it appears there is a new trend afloat to again attempt to reduce the length of training for CEDC. At some centers, like Ninh Thuan, training was curtailed from 9 months in 1996 to 6 months in 1997, and is expected to be only 4 months for the 1998 class. By reducing the length of training the JSCs can increase their overall success rates in terms of final examinations. However, by doing so they lose sight of the true project intention: providing CEDC with vocational training to improve their livelihoods and income earning capacities.

Shortening the length of training serves to further reduce the CEDC graduate's chances of job placement and income generation. Limiting course length would also seem to be cause for concern in terms of its true effectiveness in training any student. However, perhaps since fee-paying students have the option and the wherewithal to take additional courses, this actually serves as an incentive for the JSCs to try to create additional demand for training, and therefore more income. Participating in additional training, however, is not an option for CEDC and compounds their struggle for self-sufficiency and job placement.

1.3 Problems with Basic Education

Experience indicates that the level of education a student possesses prior to beginning training significantly affects his or her capacity to succeed in the skills training, and ultimately to find sound employment upon graduation. However, it is also clear that *the lack of basic education in Vietnam, and specifically the quality of it, is a critical problem.* According to the GSO, the percentage of children going to school in rural areas was lower than in urban areas (73.9% compared to 82.7%), while the percentage of children without schooling in rural areas was 1.5 times higher than in urban areas. The percentage of dropouts in rural areas was more than double that in urban areas, especially in the 11- to 14-year old category, where it was about 3 times greater. The GSO also outlined a significant problem in the lack of teachers, especially well-qualified ones, with a national need for more teachers at approximately 45,000.¹¹ Such factors indicate that a large number of CEDC who should be targeted for skills training through the World Concern projects are very likely to have either limited or poor quality of education.

In response to the difficulties faced in the past relating to poor training results and low job-placement levels, World Concern has spent much effort bolstering CEDC capacity for vocational training by ensuring that ABE, further training or apprenticeships are provided to the scholarship students when necessary. In some cases, ABE was provided and further training was implemented for graduates who had very poor results. Since 1995, approximately 69 CEDC graduates were given additional training or assistance with apprenticeships at the four original JSCs. These endeavors were generally effective and have enhanced training and job placement results. However, *the project partners also attempted to alter their training results by requiring higher levels of education for CEDC.* Although understandable, these actions have the potential to exclude the most needy CEDC from participating in training. *Such actions call into question whether or not the current JSC selection process will truly benefit those CEDC in need.*

In response to some of these issues, World Concern has made effective efforts to move away from formal vocational training (and the accompanying complications) towards more applicable agricultural and animal husbandry instruction in locations that are based in the CEDC communities. This has been an important response by World Concern. However, it does not seem likely that the JSCs, under the vocational training mandate and national curriculum of MOLISA, will be as supportive of such innovations any time soon.

2 Job Placement Findings

2.1 Overall Objectives

Job placement and the income generation capacity of the training graduates is not only a program objective in and of itself, but also the primary indicator in identifying project impact and success. Under the current grant period, World Concern expanded their efforts to ensure that CEDC graduating from vocational training programs either obtain appropriate employment opportunities or are equipped with the necessary initial resources to generate income through their own small businesses. The primary goal was to create self-reliance and improve the economic livelihood of CEDC graduates. World Concern sought to strengthen the job placement efforts of the JSCs, who had come under a new job placement mandate from MOLISA in early 1997, by offering technical and financial support, as well as management training to the Centers. Under the direction of the DOLISA, the new mandate expanded the JSCs responsibilities from only providing vocational training to including job-placement initiatives for all graduates as well. The specific World Concern objectives for developing the job placement component of the program are outlined in the table below.

Objective 3 Strengthen JSC job placement capacity, monitor job placement progress

Activities	Intended Results	Benchmarks	Time Frame
provide technical/ financial support to DOLISA JSCs	3 of 4 original JSCs complete staff training in counseling and job placement	staff selected for job placement positions at 3 of 4 JSCs	by end 2 nd quarter
follow-up workshops for graduates		one graduate workshop completed at each site	quarters 1, 2, 3 & 4
monitor graduate progress determine status of 95-97 grads, assess employment and livelihood needs, develop action plans for unemployed	follow-up surveys completed reports submitted by trained JSC staff	at least 75% of 95-96 graduates surveyed	by end grant period quarterly

2.1.1 General Findings

In general, *the job placement aspect of the program continued to struggle along*. There were some successful highlights, but contributing factors, many beyond the control of World Concern and the JSCs, hampered efforts and resulted in generally low quantitative placement results.

As in the past, the agrarian nature of Vietnam's economy represents one of the greatest challenges to World Concern's job placement objectives. *Often the skills learned were not applicable in the graduates' home villages where demand for tailors or electricians or motorbike repairmen was limited and industrial factories were rare*. Urban centers represented the greatest possibility for employment and financial improvement, but such placements required graduates to leave their homes and function for extended periods of time without important family and community support systems. For example, in Binh Thuan the majority of the CEDC graduates were trained in industrial and/or domestic sewing, (66% of those interviewed in the follow-up survey) but only about half of the sewing students were actually using their skills to earn a living. Of those who were working and using their sewing skills, 92% were living away from home and working at urban shops or factories. Relocation was especially difficult for CEDC, who depend heavily on their families for social, emotional, cultural and economic support.

I only was allowed to do very simple work, my income was very low and I had to manage everything on my own. I was always sad. - CEDC at HCMC sewing factory

I was very sad and homesick. I still had not received further training to improve my skills and my income hadn't changed. - CEDC after 2 years at sewing factory in HCMC

Another factor impacting job placement results was the *limited skill capacity of the graduates after completing training in a very tough job marketplace*. Although most CEDC passed the standardized final examinations administered by the JSCs, their work preparedness seems questionable. As with previous findings, employers almost unanimously agreed that graduates lacked the necessary skills to work on their own and required a lot of additional training before they could be considered beneficial employees. It was clear that employers were often very hesitant to hire CEDC because of the

perception that doing so would be a risk. This is often compounded by critical or negative attitudes of the general public towards CEDC.

Because the societal and economic barriers a CEDC graduate must overcome in securing employment are immense, it becomes even more important that they make themselves desirable to employers by being well-qualified for job placement in their chosen skill. This is especially true if CEDC graduates are going to compete against other, mainstream JSC graduates for already scarce jobs in the marketplace. In fact, when interviewed for the Evaluation, some CEDC graduates themselves expressed concern over the quality of their abilities and in their lack of preparedness to fulfill responsibilities of the workplace.

I knew when I graduated that I still didn't have the skills necessary to work in a private shop, so I went to work in a factory in Ho Chi Minh City - graduate of sewing training

I thought the skill chosen was good for me, but I felt that what I was taught was too little for what I knew I would need to work in the real world. - graduate of electricity training

The causes of why many CEDC are often unqualified for employment after graduation requires detailed exploration, although it is not one of the objectives of this Evaluation. However, there is room for constructive conjecture. One explanation may perhaps be found in the qualifications of the JSC teachers or the unrealistic working demands placed on them, as well as the training curriculum. It is unclear what qualifications most JSC instructors possess, although when asked many said they had previously worked in the vocational field that they taught. As is true of the troubles facing the educational system of Vietnam in general, very low salaries, long hours, and extremely difficult and adverse working environments may also greatly reduce the capacity for the JSCs to attract highly competent, qualified vocational training instructors. Adding to this, the didactic, traditional training methodologies employed may not be very effective in teaching inexperienced, shy and undereducated CEDC.

The too-short duration of classes also impacts learning, the difficulties of which have already been outlined. In addition, the economic, social and emotional difficulties that most CEDC face everyday as they try to learn are sure to detract from their ability to concentrate on their studies. Unfortunately, it is clear that the needs of targeted CEDC are immense and often require a comprehensive approach that goes beyond basic vocational training.

2.1.2 Tuyen Quang: The Struggle Continues with Job Placement

World Concern initially resisted DOLISA's request for support of a sewing class at the JSC when they initiated their community-based project in Tuyen Quang. Concerned with the continuing poor rate of job placement after formal vocational training, especially in sewing, World Concern was understandably hesitant. However, the JSC agreed to give additional assurances for enhancing job placement after graduation, including alternative basic education, extra staff training in counseling and social work, as well as specific age and education level prerequisites. Furthermore, the JSC developed an income generation scheme, which linked jobs for CEDC graduates with work contracts at the Center's proposed sewing enterprise.

More importantly, a contract between the JSC and World Concern in the Protocol of Agreement signed on 27 September, 1997 served to commit both parties to the job placement objectives. This contract states that the JSC will "commit to find enough jobs for 10 CEDC to work continuously and to earn an average income of 300,000 VND per month" and "provide to World Concern copies of contracts assuring the sale of products sufficient to support the enterprise."¹² If the JSC does not meet these objectives by 31 March, 2000 they will be held accountable for repaying the 70,000,000 VND loan in full to World Concern. *These initiatives by World Concern were especially representative of their efforts to secure job placement for their target beneficiaries.* In fact, documents were indeed presented to World Concern prior to beginning the training by the JSC Director demonstrating their contract with a state enterprise to complete uniforms for the government.

Unfortunately, during the Evaluation visit it became evident that only 6 out of 12 graduates were working, while the rest had been sent home (originally 15 were participating, but this dropped to 12 after 3 returned home). Even during our stay, one of those was sent home due to lack of work. In fact, the original contract with the state enterprise had ended after only ten days of work. They had begun a new contract, but it too was only to last a month. In order to make the number of days of work last longer, the JSC had let go of one graduate so that the other five had enough to do.

We wish the JSC or World Concern could create stable employment for us or give us more work to do. We're afraid of being sent back home because our families live in extremely poor conditions and we won't be able to help them.
– graduates from Tuyen Quang

Once again, even after rather extraordinary efforts by World Concern to develop project partner assurances, the job placement rate for those trained at the Tuyen Quang JSC has not proceeded smoothly. When asked whether the JSC thought such training was effective if job placement was not forthcoming, the JSC Director explained that as soon as the "situation" changed it would improve, therefore such formal training should continue. World Concern, on the other hand, privately expressed their dismay that even a seemingly binding contract could not improve the situation. Although the JSC does have quite some time before they begin to be held to their commitment, it is questionable whether they will be able to do so given the numerous uphill battles beyond their control that they will face in the near future. Adding to these challenges, the current economic crisis facing Vietnam, and Asia as a whole, presents yet another roadblock in CEDC access to jobs and opportunities for income generation.

2.2 Follow-Up Survey of Graduates

In order to determine effectively the impact of interventions on the graduates, World Concern administered a follow-up survey of 1995 and 1996 graduates from four original project sites. The survey was the first of its kind in the World Concern project and *revealed valuable information for understanding the continuing situation of the graduates.* The importance of this type of monitoring mechanism cannot be more emphatically expressed. In fact, if this effort had been made earlier in the project implementation process, responses and adaptations could have been more immediate and fluid.

The specific purpose of the survey was to identify which graduates were successfully employed and doing well and which graduates were under or unemployed and in need of further assistance. The written format was developed by a World Concern team and its application was completed by pre-selected JSC staff who had earlier participated in counseling and social work skills training (see Section VII, subsection 3, page 30). In certain cases, a World Concern project officer provided interviewing assistance during home visits. Organization of data collected was completed by World Concern.

2.2.1 Difficulties Encountered

Difficulties faced during the survey completion were largely related to *logistics and the limitations of the JSC staff.* Often severe weather and/or inhospitable traveling conditions complicated the home visits. The widespread geographic locations of most graduates also represented great difficulties for the survey teams. These factors not only complicated the survey efforts, but are the primary reason why follow-up of project participants has been so limited in the past. In reviewing the survey results, it quickly became evident that these difficulties led to a large number of 'interviews' being collected not from the graduates themselves, but from friends, relatives, neighbors or teachers, who may or may not correctly speak for the CEDC. This must be taken into account in the following discussion of the final results. Additionally, even though World Concern attempted to ensure consistency across all project sites by developing the survey format themselves, there were specific inconsistencies in the reporting which made the overall final analysis of it complicated (see Appendix 6, *Summary of Graduate Follow-Up Survey*).

2.2.2 Survey Analysis

JSC and World Concern staff interviewed a *total of 282 graduates* (about 92% of all 1995 and 1996 beneficiaries) during home or work visits between the beginning of July and the end of August, 1998. Four World Concern project partner administrations participated in the survey, including Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan, Quang Ngai and Ha Tinh. Unfortunately, a relatively large number of those interviewed, 29%, did not provide clear information on their current status. Additionally, gender breakdowns were not provided.

The survey revealed five skill categories in which the CEDC were trained: sewing (63%), motorbike repair (20%), electricity (9%), driving (2%) and computers/typing (1%). It was unclear how many sewing trainees were female, but only two girls (less than 1%) were given a second option in training choice (in computers). Of those surveyed, approximately 46% were 1996 graduates, 41% were from the 1995 classes, and 8% from 1994 (3% were unrecorded). *Only 42% of those interviewed said they were employed, while 41% were either under- or unemployed.* Of those who

were unemployed, 59% had been trained in sewing, 27% in motorcycle repair and 8% in electricity. 60% of those who were underemployed were trained in motorcycle repair. *Looking at the overall picture, graduates only had a fifty-fifty chance of gaining employment or earning an income after completing training.*

Unfortunately, the survey interviewers often did not record the specifics about graduate employment, but the information does provide a rough idea. For example, in Binh Thuan 3% of the graduates said they were receiving further training, and only 10% had opened their own shop or business. Even more discouraging, *only 29% of those employed were actually doing work that was related to the skills that they learned through the program.* Of this group, 80% were from the sewing courses. The only employment option for the majority of these sewing graduates who did have jobs was in factories far from home in the cities. The lowest rate of job placement according to skill learned was in motorbike repair, with only 1 out of 20 actually working in their skill. Driving represented the highest rate with 3 out of 5 working in their chosen skill.

After the course we couldn't find jobs because we weren't skilled enough. The skills we learned didn't fit with our current life situations because society needs well-skilled workers and we weren't qualified enough. — 1995 & 1996 graduates from Ninh Thuan

We're really disappointed with our situations. We liked the skills we learned, but realized after graduation that they weren't enough to get jobs, so we decided to do something else. — 1995 & 1996 graduates from Ninh Thuan

Of all interviewees, *only 42% reported earning an income*, although there was some discrepancy in that some of those who reported working didn't report an income. This may reflect the tendency of many people in Vietnam to try to hide income from authorities to avoid the high taxes. However, it may more likely indicate that many graduates are underemployed and, feeling that their incomes are insufficient, do not believe they warrant reporting. *The average income earned was 266,000 VND per month*, which is approximately \$18 USD (\$1 USD = 14,500 VND). However, this average is skewed by the relatively higher incomes of graduates who work for factories. For example, if we look at Binh Thuan we can see that of all those earning incomes, *73% worked in sewing factories, earning 53% more than those who worked on their own* (the average for a factory worker is 334,000/month while it is only 158,000/month for non-factory workers). Somewhat surprisingly, those with the lowest average salaries (135,000/month) were working in computer-related fields.

We are still unable to support ourselves. We still have to depend on our families although it is very hard for them in their daily lives. — 1995 & 1996 graduates from Ninh Thuan

The findings on employment status and income suggest that the overall effectiveness of the formal vocational skills training was not very successful. However, these results are not necessarily unexpected. Findings from *the Mid-Term Evaluation similarly suggested concern over the effectiveness of traditional vocational skills training and, in response, World Concern immediately set about on efforts to adapt their continuing program accordingly.* As such, new projects during this grant period have focused on adapting skills training to more relevant vocations that will apply in the local communities. Additionally, training efforts being developed are more community-based and participatory in their methodologies. In combination with the income generation activities for CEDC participants, this new approach has a much greater potential for future livelihood improvement. Such adaptations, while yet to be tested, are likely to be more effective in the long run than traditional approaches used at the JSCs.

2.3 Follow-Up Workshops for Graduates

One of the most effective and successful new initiatives of the program during this grant period was the implementation of follow-up workshops for the graduates of the original training programs. The training workshops, held at the four original JSCs, focused on the development of basic life skills for youth and adolescents. Partially in response to the success of the workshops at the original sites, World Concern also began implementing them at the new projects in Tuyen Quang and Hien for current CEDC training participants. In addition, two training-of-trainers workshops for 38 management staff from the JSCs and minority schools were completed in Da Nang and Quang Ngai in life skills training methodologies and youth counseling.

The specific objectives of the workshops were to 1) determine the current work status and short-term results of the vocational training graduates, 2) better understand the "life skill" level of competence of the targeted young people in such areas as communication, goal-setting, problem-solving, time and money management, and conflict resolution, and 3) provide basic instruction in these areas through participatory training. For these workshops, life skills were generally defined as "those skills needed by an individual to operate effectively in society in an active and constructive manner" and "personal and social skills required for young people to function confidently and competently." These definitions and the curriculum were based on similar life skills training programs developed by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).¹³

2.3.1 Feedback from Participants

In virtually every site visited during the Evaluation, *project partners, teachers and World Concern staff alike expressed their unanimous approval of these workshops.* As reported by World Concern management, at first many project partners and even World Concern staff who had been conditioned by traditional Vietnamese learning methods were skeptical about the type of participatory and games-oriented approach that was used. However, by the end of the workshop they had become convinced of its efficacy and were hoping to benefit from additional workshop opportunities. In fact, *some project partners expressed disappointment that such workshops had not been conducted earlier and at regular intervals* in the project implementation. It was this type of feedback that moved World Concern to implement the workshops at the new project sites.

In addition, the young people from the workshops were very enthusiastic and pleased to have participated. *During the evaluation interviews with CEDC graduates, the overwhelming and unsolicited feedback on the workshops was extremely positive* and had been the first training using non-traditional methods that the CEDC had ever been involved in. CEDC participants expressed pleasure not only in the content of the workshops, but also in the opportunity it gave them to learn from each other and to explore issues that directly affected their lives.

2.3.2 Impact of the Workshops

The direct impact of the life skills workshops on the participants, especially the young people, is difficult to measure. However, understanding the life skills elements that are essential for the successful, independent living of CEDC is as critical as training in a marketable skill or income generation.

In the rural areas, most families maintain very simple lives based on a patriarchal system. Young people who live with their families are generally not considered adults until they have either married or reached their mid-twenties. Often, real life responsibilities and independent living skills are not emphasized until later for many young people. Because of this, their social and emotional development is not always as advanced as their urban, more educated counterparts.

After the workshops, many graduates explained how they had used some of the skills they learned during training. Some told of how they used the time and money management skills in their work or everyday life, others said they tried to express their thoughts more clearly in their family or with neighbors, and some described how they felt more confident when speaking or undertaking a new task. Additionally, some parents expressed their pride and pleasure in their abilities to assist with larger family responsibilities. *Teachers, JSC directors and World Concern project officers who knew the students in the past reported with surprise that many had more confidence, spoke more often and seemed more mature.*

What we liked the best about participating in the program was the life skills training. We liked this because we could learn about and easily apply these skills in our lives.
- 1995-1996 graduates from Ninh Thuan

Teachers regularly reported that some of their greatest difficulties with the CEDC during training was their limited capacity to understand very basic concepts. They explained that the students were "too shy", that they "wouldn't ask questions" and "had no understanding of rules or discipline." This was due in part to their limited education level, but also because of their lack of skill in communication, problem-solving, self-esteem, conflict resolution and goal setting. The teachers often explained how they had tried to teach the young people such life skills in their spare time during the vocational training, but that it was too difficult to help all of them in the limited time. Additionally, they themselves didn't have the training necessary for the type of counseling and life skills instruction that was needed. *The teachers*

explained that the workshops, both for the students and the TOT for the teachers, were extremely beneficial to them, but would have made their jobs easier if they had been held earlier

Finally, it is important to mention the impact that the TOT workshops in life skills and counseling had on project partners. For many there was an obvious change of attitude towards CEDC. In the past, CEDC were viewed as "difficult to teach", "simple-minded" or "incapable" in many aspects of life. Such attitudes, although common, were very patronizing towards the poor in general and CEDC in particular. *The TOT workshops, more than anything else, seemed to make a dent in such attitudes by raising awareness of many project partners and increasing their understanding of the critical issues facing CEDC.* Additionally, the training focused on basic counseling skills, how to communicate with young people, and psycho-social human development. In learning such skills, project partners were introduced to new, more appropriate methods for serving their target beneficiaries. Such efforts were critical in World Concern's objective to ensure sustainability of the projects and to indirectly influence future local initiatives for working with CEDC.

V EVALUATION FINDINGS *FAMILY SUPPORT THROUGH MICROCREDIT*

1 Overall Objectives

Originally, World Concern planned to assist 150 to 200 families caring for children at risk in Thai Binh province with small microcredit loans in the amount of \$50 to \$75 USD each. These loans were designed to strengthen the family's income generating capacity and thus their ability to support their children at home. To prepare them for these endeavors, World Concern determined to provide community-based training for the targeted families on how to use the loans, as well as training for project implementers on microcredit management. Lastly, because many of the families identified for assistance were also caring for special-needs children, World Concern sought to provide extra training in disability awareness and caring methodologies to improve their coping and caretaking skills. Ultimately, after encountering serious problems in Thai Binh (the area-wide social unrest), World Concern's redirected this initiative to Tuyen Quang, where a community-based cow bank project was established instead.

Objective 2 Small loans and community-based training for families and project partners

Activities	Intended Results	Benchmarks	Time Frame
provide \$50-\$75 in-kind loans for families	80% of families begin IGAs & report higher income after 2 years	150-200 families identified & loans distributed	by end 3 rd quarter
training for recipients on use of funds	develop knowledge of microcredit and animal husbandry skills	150-200 families receive training	by end 3 rd quarter
extra training for families with special-needs children	better understanding/coping abilities in caring for special-needs children	undefined # of families receive training	4 th and 5 th quarters
complete skills development training for project partners	develop knowledge of microcredit and loan management	undefined # of project partners receive training	by end 3 rd quarter

2 General Results

As with other scenarios during this grant period, World Concern's efforts in accomplishing this objective as originally formulated were initially stymied by some insurmountable odds. Again, *the obstacles that ultimately caused World Concern to alter their site location were beyond anything that World Concern had the power to control.*

In the spring before the new grant began, after completing extensive research on community-based rehabilitation programs in Vietnam and a thorough needs-assessment of various provinces for project implementation, World Concern decided to work in 3 communes in Quynh Phu district of Thai Binh Province. *Past project experience in Thai Binh had been disappointing under partnership with both DOLISA and the privately owned TEMC. However, World Concern was very optimistic and comfortable with their new project partner, the Thai Binh Women's Union.*

After identifying 66 families with disabled and at-risk children during a community needs-assessment survey, World Concern began negotiations with the Women's Union to implement the community-based credit and savings program.

Agreements were signed, baseline data verified, staff management and microcredit trainings completed with Women's Union community workers and project recipients, and loans distributed – all according to schedule. Then, just when World Concern thought the project was too good to be true – it was.

2.1 Troubles in Thai Binh: The Aid to Families with Children Project

In a severe blow to World Concern's momentum, the Thai Binh Women's Union unexpectedly and promptly terminated the project and ultimately returned the funds previously disbursed. The probable cause of the Women's Union's sudden reversal was an unprecedented protest by local people in the province, situated directly in Quynh Phu district, in response to official corruption. In the wake of this protest, most PVOs with projects operating in the area were either terminated or placed on hold. To date, many projects have not been restored.

World Concern responded to this setback quickly and efficiently. Although the target dates were delayed, they were able to redirect and adapt the program to Tuyen Quang, which in many respects was more effective in that it served to consolidate World Concern's program as recommended in the Mid-Term Evaluation. Faced with the disintegration of the project at the start of the first quarter, by the end of the third quarter a signed agreement had been reached with Tuyen Quang's DOLISA to begin a microcredit program in the form of a cow bank. Then, by the end of the fourth quarter, a survey identifying needy families had been completed and training for the beneficiaries in cow bank procedures and techniques for animal husbandry had been implemented. *What began as a major setback has, through the extraordinary efforts on the part of World Concern, turned into something quite successful.*

2.2 Success in Tuyen Quang: The Cow Bank Project for Families with CEDC

The cow bank project in Tuyen Quang was initiated for the purpose of assisting needy families to generate income to independently support their children in the home. *The families targeted for such assistance were those who were experiencing extremely difficult circumstances and whose children were at-risk of displacement from the home. The project was therefore preventative in nature.*

The project was given a much-needed head start in that its project structure and procedures were based on the model developed from the expertise of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), another PVO in Vietnam. Additionally, the past experiences of DOLISA in implementing and managing similar operations were extremely beneficial in initiating the project. Furthermore, the district chosen for the cow bank was the same one in which the agricultural training for CEDC was concurrently being implemented. This meant that *the support systems for implementation, training, monitoring and follow-up were already in place.*

With the assistance of the DOLISA and the community workers from the APC, the project began with 105 cattle, and expanded with the purchase of 47 more for the second group of families by the end of the sixth quarter. The total number of families assisted in this program was 152. The cattle have had 7 births and only 2 deaths in the 6 months that the project has been running. *In the time span of only one quarter, these families were experiencing very positive results, although the time required for the cattle to develop into adulthood is still quite a ways off.*

The animal husbandry trainers from the APC explained that the cows were relatively easy for families to raise. The APC community workers also provide valuable support, not only completing the training, but doing the follow-up, vaccinations, emergency assistance if a cow is ill, and breeding after 14 to 16 months. *The greatest threat to the cattle was disease carried through water, such as anthrax, but so far none of the families had experienced such troubles.* Not unexpectedly, given the project's as yet brief implementation time, none of the families said they had been able to generate any income yet, but they all planned to spend any future income generated first on buying food and then on school fees. All families interviewed said that the community workers had been to visit them regularly since the beginning of the project to follow-up on their progress and to continue their hands-on training.

Difficulties that the project implementers faced revolved primarily around follow-up. The community workers effectively had two jobs, one for the World Concern project, which comprised about 30% of their time, and the other job directly for the APC, which required the other 70% of their time. In the 30% time slotted for World Concern, they were responsible for all aspects of the project, including the agricultural and animal husbandry training, the community-based family training, the cow bank, and all monitoring and follow-up. Adding to these complications was the fact that the community workers had very limited transportation options – only one motorbike for all 3 communes. Often, the community workers had to sacrifice some part of the World Concern project in order to meet all their obligations for the APC. Typically, the follow-up aspect for the cow bank was the sacrificial lamb of the project that was short-changed.

Although these difficulties have not had a significant impact on the cow bank at this early date in the project, the likelihood for trouble increases if follow-up is not administered regularly

2 2 1 Factors Affecting the Success of the Cow Bank Project

During Evaluation interviews, *project partners expressed their belief that the cow bank was the most successful aspect of all the World Concern projects in Tuyen Quang. In fact, one of the strengths of the program is the strong support it enjoys from MOLISA.* The project partners explained that all aspects of the project – the cow bank, the agricultural and animal husbandry training for students, community-based training for families, and the inputs – all fit very well together. These projects were also relatively easy to coordinate, especially with the promotional efforts of the APC in the communities, which created very high local interest and satisfaction. *During interviews, families likewise explained that the cattle project "fit" well into their lives and that raising cattle was very easy to understand and do.* This was because the parent(s) could be responsible for the primary needs of the cow, (feeding, cleaning the stall, health care, building the shed, etc.) while the child could manage the relatively simple task after attending school of taking the cow to pasture.

Even more importantly, perhaps, is that this particular project gives families who are the poorest of the poor a chance to improve their conditions, and with that chance a sense of empowerment in the outcome of their lives. The relevance of participant empowerment in project success is further demonstrated when comparing it to the income generation activities at the JSCs and some of the minority schools. As outlined in other sections of this report, the JSCs and schools have had many, many troubles achieving success with their livestock IGAs. However, when project partner management sought to curb their losses by farming out the livestock to individual families in the community for care, they saw a marked improvement in the health and reproductive rates among the animals. This is demonstrated with the goat herd in Ha Tinh and the cattle in Giang. (See also Section VI, subsection 2 1 on page 25.)

It appears that it is not mere coincidence that the animals do better when individual participants become involved and are given the opportunity to develop a sense of ownership in project outcomes. Although it appears that the income generated for CEDC scholarships is reduced using this approach, it nevertheless clearly indicates the importance of empowerment in project success. *Simply put, where there is a lack of project ownership and empowerment of participants or project partners, there is likewise limited success in outcomes.*

2 2 2 Community-Based Training for Families

It should be noted that some aspects of the original community-based family training activities planned by World Concern to meet the goals for objective 2 ultimately were eliminated because they no longer fit the needs identified in the new project locale. Specifically, the extra training planned on disability awareness and coping strategies for families with disabled children in Thai Binh was eliminated when the project was redirected to Tuyen Quang.

Community-based animal husbandry training for the families receiving cow bank loans followed the same general model as the agricultural training completed for CEDC. *Because of the limited implementation time allotted for the cow bank project (resulting from the troubles in Thai Binh), training was shortened and less comprehensive than the project coordinators would have liked.* The overall length of training for the families, the amount of base-theory provided, and training materials were fairly limited. Because of this, the community workers spent much more time working with the families at their homes to teach them appropriate cattle husbandry techniques. Although theoretically this was a good alternative plan, the conflicting demand for time between the World Concern project and the APC made implementation difficult.

Most families visited during the Evaluation were single parent, female-headed households. All those interviewed explained that the parent was the one who attended training, not the targeted child. This made sense because the child was often too young to be trained in animal husbandry skills. However, the children did participate in the program in that they cared for the cows in the fields after school, a traditional chore that many small children in rural Vietnam do everyday.

The families said they had received two days of formal instruction, as well as books on animal husbandry. To supplement this limited amount of training, *the community workers completed most of the additional instruction for families in the home.* Such training included instruction on feeding, herding, disease prevention, shelter, treatment of illness, breeding and cleaning. *It was unclear how comprehensive this training had been, however, or how well prepared the families were to independently care for their cattle, especially since no mechanism for pre- and post-testing the skills of the*

beneficiaries was used For example, when asked about training that was provided for families on the prevention of hoof and mouth disease, the project coordinator explained that they had been taught how to clean the stable, but not about how often to clean it or how to clean the cow's hooves. Regular cleaning of the hooves and stable is one of the most simple, effective means of preventing this disease. When asked during interviews, the families didn't know how to clean the hooves or that the procedure helped to prevent the disease.

The project partners would like to strengthen their follow-up efforts, especially with CEDC and families who require lots of extra assistance The project partners believe this will help offset some of the difficulties they have had thus far. For example, sometimes the community workers had trouble targeting the training appropriately because the age range and educational level of the students or families varied so widely. To solve this, the project partners would like to divide the students and families into two groups, one for those who are literate, and one for those who are illiterate. Additionally, *the project partners would like to enhance their training program for students and families by including site visits to successful farmers in neighboring provinces to explore their techniques in animal husbandry and agriculture*. Unfortunately, these plans will likely require more time on the part of the community workers. This means that the time allotted for the World Concern project may have to be expanded, which will likely conflict with their responsibilities to the APC.

VI EVALUATION FINDINGS *INCOME GENERATION FOR PROJECT PARTNERS*

1 Overall Objectives

During this grant period, World Concern continued its efforts with some of the original project partners in their income generation activities. These partners included Ha Tinh, Quang Ngai, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan and at the minority schools of Giang and Phuoc Son. *The major emphasis at the original sites revolved around monitoring efforts*, through technical support, field visits, and regular reporting. These monitoring efforts were particularly focused on determining the project partners' continued capability for *autonomously funding vocational skills training scholarships for CEDC*. At the new Tuyen Quang site, World Concern also assisted the JSC in developing new income generation activities. At this site and at some of the original sites, training equipment was provided to enhance the capacity of the JSCs and minority schools to attract fee-paying students and thus further strengthen the centers' ability to provide scholarships.

Objective 5 Provide technical assistance for income generation activities assess impact of such activities

Activities	Intended Results	Benchmarks	Time Frame
provide professional monitoring/technical assistance	generate profits for JSCs/minority schools to independently	income generated sufficient to support 3 CEDC scholarships	funds for scholarships end 4 th quarter,
monitor IGAs via site visits and quarterly reports	a provide scholarships for at least 5 CEDC to receive skills training		periodic visits by shuttle veterinarian, impact assessment every 6 mos, reports quarterly
develop alternative IGAs where projects face failure	b cover the costs of training consumables		

2 Income Generation and New Equipment for Project Partners

2.1 Income Generation Activities

It appears that animal husbandry income generation activities administered directly through the project partners had the lowest success and productivity rates. On the other hand, *when responsibility for the care of the animals was delegated to families of the students, they did much better*. This was demonstrated with the cattle in Giang and the goats in Ha Tinh. Likewise, as indicated with the Cow Bank project and the start-up assistance in the form of animals or trees supplied to graduates, the students and their families took better care of the inputs than the job service centers did. Perhaps this is because the *families felt a greater sense of responsibility, empowerment and involvement in seeing the project succeed than did the JSCs*. This explanation is further strengthened when remembering that most of the JSCs located their herds far from their training and administrative headquarters. With this distance came a related reduction in interest on the part of the project partners—perhaps something along the lines of “out of sight, out of mind”.

2.1.1 Challenges in Monitoring and Technical Assistance World Concern Project Management Issues

During the grant period, World Concern also experienced some significant difficulties in providing technical assistance and technical monitoring of the IGAs. The plans developed by World Concern to provide technical assistance to the JSCs were clear, creative and initially began successfully. However, *after the hiring and training of a local technician with expertise in agriculture and animal husbandry, World Concern suffered from his unexplained withdrawal from the project.* This withdrawal came well into the grant period, after the projects had begun and project partner relationships had been established with the new technician. Identifying qualified local project officers with this expertise in Vietnam is extremely difficult, and World Concern was unable to find an appropriate replacement, especially within the timeframe left in the grant period. The position for technical project assistance monitor was left vacant.

This unfortunate staff problem had a direct, negative impact on the project. First, there was no one with the necessary expertise at World Concern to continue appropriate monitoring of the agricultural/veterinary income generation and training components at the sites. Second, the technician's sudden withdrawal caused a gap in management, which created discontinuity between World Concern and the project partners. This was complicated even further by the additional staff troubles in expatriate management at World Concern, outlined in Section VIII, subsection 2.1.1 (page 31).

2.2 Technical Support Providing New Equipment

A major commitment by World Concern has, in the past and during this current grant period, included a large outlay of funds to provide technical equipment for vocational training at the project sites. Equipment purchased during the current grant period has included industrial and domestic sewing machines, computers, printers, machines for woodworking (including band saws, drills, etc.) welding machines, motorbike repair equipment, consumables for practice, and more. *The overall outlay for equipment during the 18-month period was reported by World Concern to be \$52,370.* This does not include money spent on construction in Hien or building repairs at other sites, or salaries, administration, consumables or maintenance supplies. (Specifics on these equipment purchases can be found in Appendix 1, *Project Accomplishments*.)

In examining the equipment, (some of which had only recently arrived and had not even been unpacked) it looked to be in relatively good shape. *The project partners had taken good care of the equipment, although there is a difference between Western standards and those in Vietnam.* Disrupted access to regular electricity, simple classroom environments, and limited knowledge of the proper care and cleaning of equipment (to name a few examples) make caring for the goods difficult at times. Additionally, there was *still some question as to how often the JSC scholarship students had access to the World Concern-purchased equipment for practice in comparison to their fee-paying counterparts.* This would be especially important if the scholarship students require more time for practice to keep up with their classes as reported by their teachers and the JSC administrators.

World Concern's purpose in providing new equipment to the job serviced centers has always been based on the notion that in strengthening the ability of the JSCs to attract fee-paying students, they will be able to reciprocally support a certain number of CEDC through scholarships. Concurrently, such support will enable the centers to sustain their long-term viability. The quantitative objectives of formal vocational training are quite direct: new skills in a specific trade and job placement and/or income generation for improved livelihood. *Unfortunately, the outcomes of the formal vocational training program under the direction of the JSCs do not seem to justify the outlay of funds and human effort that World Concern has offered since 1992.* Quite simply, the job placement rate has repeatedly been much lower than planned, income generation for graduates, if at all, remains at a level that is not self-sustaining, and competency levels and applicability of skills that graduates acquired remains questionable.

One of the most important questions raised during the Evaluation was the value of supporting centralized vocational training centers, especially when weighing the cost of providing equipment against the actual benefits. During this short, 18-month period, World Concern spent \$52,370 on equipment alone for formal vocational training institutions, not including graduate start-up assistance, scholarship costs, consumables, income generation schemes, and infrastructure costs. *This means that the general cost-per-student was \$468 for 112 JSC beneficiaries* (this number is derived from the 12 Tuyen Quang JSC students, plus an estimated 25 students per year purportedly funded by the 4 original JSCs). *Taking into account the job placement findings from the graduate survey, that is, the fifty-fifty chance that these graduates will be able to find employment, the cost-per-student then becomes \$1,007.*

The question becomes, "*Is this a reasonable and cost-effective means of assisting marginalized young people?*" If World Concern's financial investment is depreciated over, say, a five-year period, the cost-per-student obviously becomes much more reasonable. However, such depreciation would then suggest at the minimum a five-year commitment by World Concern to see the project through, rather than the more short-term involvement that their USAID funding currently allows. Given the questions raised below on issues involved in JSC funding of CEDC scholarships, the efficacy of these expenditures is even more complicated.

On the other hand, World Concern spent an estimated \$40,950 during the same 18-month period on inputs for the agricultural training program (including all training fees, start-up assistance, administration and salaries, scholarships, etc., but not including income generation schemes) for 161 CEDC students in Hien and Tuyen Quang. *This amounts to a much more cost-effective \$254 per student (30% more students were assisted than at the JSCs, while 46% less per student was spent).* Although the results of this training are yet to be fully determined, preliminary indications suggest that it did apply more appropriately to the lives of the students and that it offers greater future potential.

3 CEDC Scholarship Funding

3.1 Project Partner Capacity to Fund CEDC Scholarships

Moneys produced by the income generation activities established through financial and technical support from World Concern did provide some means for the JSCs and minority schools to fund at least 5 CEDC scholarship students at each site. However, the CEDC scholarships provided by the JSCs were not necessarily a result of Moneys produced solely from World Concern-financed IGAs.

The IGAs still do not generate enough of an income to effectively meet the major needs of the project partners (i.e. continuing scholarship funding and cost of consumables). The JSCs are still complaining of the high costs and limited (immediate) benefits of the original income generation schemes. A few, like Ninh Thuan, even lost income due to the projects. Even though some are beginning to see healthier cattle that are reproducing relatively well, many are hoping World Concern will approve their plans to sell the herds to invest in more short-term, higher yielding projects. (Note that most of these new plans are for expensive vocational training equipment, such as computers.) Only the minority schools have had a bit more success with their animal husbandry projects.

Many JSCs reported that the scholarships had to be subsidized by government funding through DOLISA. This result can be viewed in both a positive and negative light. Although the IGAs may not have been as effective as initially hoped in generating enough income for the JSCs to provide scholarships to CEDC or to cover the costs of their consumables, the participation of DOLISA in funding such scholarships suggests a government interest in and desire to sustain vocational training programs for CEDC. It is important, however, to assess this institutional capacity in conjunction with the concerns raised in other sections of the Evaluation.

3.1.1 Questions Regarding JSC-Funded Scholarships and CEDC Criteria

Some reservations arose during the Evaluation regarding two factors: *the amount of scholarship funding received from the JSCs and the definition of a CEDC used by the various project actors.* It was unclear exactly how many CEDC received full scholarships. In many cases the scholarships were partial, covering only 50% or so of the costs for training. In such cases, students were required to pay for their own books, living expenses and some of their tuition. In other cases they were fully funded. Concern simply focused on the uncertainty of whether or not the JSCs would continue to fully fund scholarships for CEDC after World Concern ended their involvement, although it appeared certain that some form of scholarship would indeed continue.

The criteria used to define a CEDC and determine the qualifications for project participation by the JSC and the government may be different than those used by World Concern. According to MOLISA, there are 7 categories of CEDC, including orphans (full and partial), the very poor (monthly income of less than 70-90,000 VND), homeless, disabled, ethnic minorities, drug addicts, working children, and children of war heroes. For the purposes of this grant, World Concern defines CEDC as orphans, displaced children (including street children), the disabled, the very poor and ethnic minorities. They would not necessarily consider the child of a war hero a CEDC unless other criteria were also met. Given the MOLISA's high priority mandate to address the needs of the children of war heroes, concern arose over the proportion of CEDC from other categories who would be included in scholarship awards by the JSCs after World Concern's involvement ends.

3.1.2 Questions Regarding World Concern Requirements to Fund CEDC Scholarships

One of the greatest concerns in the Evaluation findings is the actual number of CEDC scholarships that the JSCs are required to independently fund after World Concern's withdrawal. Although World Concern's project objective only required 5 CEDC scholarships at each site, the total number of those sponsored was actually much greater, usually around 20 or so. The tendency of the JSCs to use their own initiative to go beyond World Concern's target number is quite positive. However, *the real worry lies with the target number of CEDC scholarships required by World Concern*. Given the great efforts World Concern took to assist the JSCs in developing their own capacity for generating income to support such scholarships, it is somewhat surprising that the number of CEDC which the JSCs are obligated to support is so low. Looking at this number, *approximately no more than 2% of the overall JSC student body at each site, in combination with the high financial expenditures in providing new equipment to the JSCs, the target seems questionable*.

VII EVALUATION FINDINGS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1 Overall Objectives

Training represents one of the keys to local capacity building and sustainability in any project. Training also requires a major commitment on the part of the funders and project implementers for it to be effective. With this in mind, *World Concern has taken determined steps to respond to lessons learned in the past by developing a progressive, more comprehensive training approach in their projects*.

During this grant period, World Concern expanded previous training efforts in an attempt to affect change in social service delivery for CEDC across a wide selection of project partners. Training participants included teachers, administrators, community workers, and managers from DOLISA, the APC, CPCC, the People's Committees and DET. This time around World Concern broadened the content emphasis to include instruction in areas that were much more intangible, such as successful independent living skills for graduates and students, adolescent development theory, participatory learning techniques, and counseling and social work skills.

Objective 4 Strengthen institutional capacity of social work education & social service delivery systems, enhance social work skills of project partners and World Concern staff

Activities	Intended Results	Benchmarks	Time Frame
provide financial support & field placements for 1-2 social work interns	1-2 interns and 1 WC staff equipped to provide social work education	minimum of 10 field activities completed (3-5 days each)	end grant period
interns and WC staff conduct on-site social work training for project partners	90% project partner staff demonstrate new skills/knowledge for working with CEDC	skill levels assessed by external social work professionals & training evaluations	1 training completed at 1 site per quarter, begin 3 rd quarter

World Concern was well-rewarded for their steady efforts the training component was one of the most successful of the entire project. Although initially many questioned its potential effectiveness, the training was ultimately applauded by managers and administrators at the provincial and local levels, teachers, community workers, World Concern staff, social work interns, parents and students alike. Not only did World Concern meet the majority of the objectives outlined below, they exceeded their expectations, not necessarily quantitatively, but in latent improvements in such aspects as change of attitudes, project ownership, and increased understanding of the needs of the target beneficiaries. These changes served to improve project implementation on a more qualitative level.

2 Capacity Building for Social Work Education

2.1 The Social Work Training Group

On a national level, World Concern focused its efforts on supporting the development of social work education as a mechanism for enhancing social service delivery in Vietnam. It is in efforts such as this that World Concern has had one of the most significant impacts.

The Social Work Training Group, consisting of loosely affiliated teachers from various state-run universities, governmental training institutions and mass organizations, received valuable support from PVOs like World Concern in their efforts to expand and enhance social work education in northern Vietnam. In particular, World Concern participated by providing field internships, financial assistance, direct staff participation, mentorship, and training guidance to the SWTG. In addition, *World Concern played a key role as an organizer and leader in initiating and expanding PVO support for the SWTG.* Other PVOs participating in such efforts included Canada Fund, Radda Barnen (Swedish Save the Children), Holt International Children's Services (Holt), Plan International (PLAN), Church World Service (CWS), and later, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), and International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC).

Efforts to develop a joint-venture consortium of PVOs in support of the SWTG were relatively slow, but consistent as the need for trainers with substantive skills in social work continued to present a problem in northern Vietnam. A cumulative, multi-phase training-of-trainers course was provided by social work professionals from the Open University in Ho Chi Minh City, through funding from an 18-month grant from the Canada Fund. Field practice was offered through internships provided by participating PVOs, including World Concern, while other PVOs provided additional training. All inputs offered SWTG members positive opportunities for continued growth and professional development.

By strengthening practical techniques, theoretical knowledge, and community application mechanisms of local social service delivery professionals and government administrators, World Concern has influenced the establishment of an effective training approach in higher education. The practical mechanisms and theoretical foundations of this approach can be applied in future project implementation and in the delivery of community-based social services. *Capacity building in this area not only served to strengthen social work education in Vietnam as a whole, it played a crucial, direct role in developing the practical skills and theoretical knowledge of World Concern's project partners in working with marginalized young people, especially at the community level.*

2.2 Social Work Internships

Three social work interns from the Women's Union Training School and the Youth Union Training School completed 12-month field placements for World Concern in 1996-97 and 1997-98, respectively. *The interns, whose benefits to the project were initially untested, proved their worth and effectiveness beyond a doubt by the end of the grant.* Their internship responsibilities included training assessments, negotiations on training with project partners, curricula development, training implementation for students and project partners, and CEDC follow-up and monitoring. They accomplished all of these with commitment and enthusiasm.

It must also be mentioned, however, that the training initiatives were largely facilitated by the Child Specialist/Trainer, rather than the interns. In fact, as is evident in other project components, *if not for the direct involvement of World Concern's staff expertise and direction, the interns would have most likely not had the same success in accomplishing the training objectives.* This is not necessarily a negative thing. The primary objective of the internships was to provide a venue for the practical education of the interns, who were designated as future social work trainers from various government or quasi-government agencies and institutions for higher education. Given the interns' extremely limited practical experience and relatively narrow social work education backgrounds, it would stand to reason that they would require clear direction and supervision of their field placement work.

The internships were highly successful in a number of ways. Working very well together as a team with World Concern's Child Specialist/Trainer, Ms Hoa, the interns provided effective training for participants at all project levels, including target beneficiaries, management, teachers, and community workers. Training content focused on everything from TOT and counseling techniques for project partners working with adolescents, to independent living skills and sex education for the young people. By bringing together project partners from different sites, including them in the training implementation, and providing an opportunity for them to work directly with CEDC, the social work team achieved another important success: *they managed to build bridges of trust and understanding between project partners and World Concern as a foreign PVO.*

In the opinions of the interns, the impact of their field experiences on their own situations was also extremely positive. Of greatest importance for all three interns was the fact that the practical experience of working with and training young people afforded them the opportunity to test their skills in practice and to apply what they learned in their work at higher education training institutions. Such experiences, they explained, significantly improved their capacity to develop social work training programs and to implement community-based projects for CEDC.

Implementing grassroots training gave us the opportunity to share our experiences and see what happens at the community level. It helped me to determine how to design and implement training in my own work.

Work Intern

– 1997-8 Social

The practical experience I gained from my internship has been helpful in my theoretical and practical understanding. It was also a good opportunity for me to exchange ideas with my colleagues and to learn how to work with CEDC.

Work Intern

– 1996-7 Social

3 Capacity Building for Project Partner Staff

Training for project partners was an evolution of the training program for the social work interns, building upon the expanding training expertise of the interns in developing the skills of the project partners. Lessons of the past taught World Concern that basic insufficiencies in independent living and social skills often create difficulties for CEDC graduates as they seek to take a role in their communities. Although the JSC staff often attempted to help the students, they too lacked the necessary skills and basic knowledge for working with and understanding the needs of CEDC. Being aware of these needs, let alone responding to them, has not been a priority for the project partners.

There was a huge gap in the knowledge of the project partners when we began training. Most only recognized the physical needs of CEDC. For example, they didn't believe the results from the follow-up survey in which students expressed their reluctance to go to cities for jobs. The JSCs saw job placement as the most important factor. They did not recognize the importance of family, emotional support or community in the lives of the students. We designed the training to address these gaps.

– World Concern Child Specialist/Trainer

Designed and implemented by the World Concern Child Specialist/Trainer and the two social work interns, the training involved a three-phase process. This process, to begin during the 3rd quarter, included 1) an initial introduction to social work as a methodology for social service delivery (completed in March, 1998), 2) comprehensive training on techniques, methods, and theories for working with children (completed in July, 1998), and 3) specific counseling techniques for working with adolescents, which was planned for September, 1998, (but not actually implemented). A TOT approach was used, emphasizing participatory methodologies, which were very new and different to the participants. *In addition to the obvious purpose of expanding the social service delivery skills of project partners, this training was intended to serve as a catalyst for the development of regular forums in life skills training for students at the JSCs.* Participants included project management, educators, and community workers from both the original and new JSCs who were pre-selected by the project partners. Specifically, the participants included staff from Tuyen Quang, Ha Tinh, Quang Ngai, Binh Thuan and Ninh Thuan.

3.1 Project Partner Training Outcomes

The success of TOT for project partners was demonstrated by the positive feedback received during the training and afterwards, during site visit follow-up. More pointedly, this success was demonstrated by project partner staff from the Ha Tinh and Quang Ngai JSCs who had completed TOT and were then able to assist in facilitating the life skills training for staff in Tuyen Quang.

In an unanticipated, but very positive outcome, many project partner staff who were not involved in the formal training for the JSCs received TOT instruction informally in their roles as assistant facilitators during life skills training for the students. This occurred not only at the JSCs, but also at the minority schools and with community workers at the commune level. Even though this training wasn't formalized, it had a visible effect on staff in terms of change in attitude towards CEDC, change in teaching methodologies used, increase in creative problem-solving initiatives, and a re-affirmation of personal interest in and commitment to the project.

At Binh Thuan, the JSC director initially considered the life skills training, and especially the participatory methods being used, an ineffective waste of time. He did not believe that the CEDC students possessed the capacity to handle the responsibilities that often accompany participatory training. However, by the end of training, the director had made an about face, recognizing the significant role it could play in developing the independent living and vocational training skills of young people. – World Concern Child Specialist/Trainer

Although there were very few down-sides to this project component, some difficulties occurred related to the limited time allotted for grant implementation and the relatively slow pace that designing, developing, organizing and implementing any training entails. *Ultimately, the last phase of the project partner training did not occur as planned in September due to time constraints.* This problem may have been averted if planning at the beginning had been more realistic. However, World Concern hopes to identify a way to complete this final phase, as well as expand and adapt it for new project partners in the new grant.

In another questionable aspect of the training, it was unclear exactly how well the trainees actually did quantitatively as there was no formal measuring mechanism in place to determine this. Although World Concern informally gauged this success by the trainees' participation levels, verbal accounts and written self-evaluations, their skill levels were not assessed by external social work professionals as originally planned. Additionally, pre- and post-testing was not used to determine before and after training impact.

VIII EVALUATION FINDINGS *PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY*

1 Project Logistics

One of the important factors impacting project effectiveness in the past was logistics. Primary among this was the sheer number of project site locations in the past. In response to the recommendations outlined in the 1997 Mid-Term Evaluation, World Concern consolidated its sites to more centralized locations. Even though monitoring objectives at all the original sites continued at fairly regular intervals, this effort allowed significantly more time to develop the quality of the programs at the reduced number of locations.

However, the remoteness of the sites, like Hien and Tuyen Quang, were still often extremely problematic. Limited and irregular flight schedules, flooding, poor roads, and wear and tear on the vehicles and staff members alike served to create difficult obstacles in project implementation and monitoring. Most of the project officers expressed their continued concern over this situation and emphasized the undue stress it often placed on them.

2 Human Resources

2.1 World Concern's Management Capacity

Compounding the troubles at many project sites was personnel turnover within World Concern project management that significantly affected training in and oversight of the livestock and agriculture projects, as well as technical assistance at many sites. There were two major staffing issues that had a negative impact on project management continuity, the first being the 12-month vacancy in the expatriate project coordinator position in Da Nang for the central project sites, and the second being the sudden departure of World Concern's newly hired local agricultural/veterinary specialist. These vacancies were compounded by World Concern management changes regionally and project partner difficulties locally, and left little in the way of options that World Concern could access in response.

2.1.1 *Personnel Turnover in Expatriate Management*

The last grant period ended with the finalization of the project coordinator's contract in Da Nang. Upon his departure, World Concern had not identified an appropriate replacement for the position. By the Fall of 1997, however, World Concern had named a new expatriate project coordinator for the Da Nang office with specialized skills in agriculture and animal husbandry. *This plan was especially prudent in that it addressed not only World Concern's management needs, but also the growing demands for technical expertise in the projects. Unfortunately, unexpected delays prevented the new project coordinator from arriving until after the current grant period was completed.*

Attempting to offset the complications arising from this delay, World Concern retained the services of the new project coordinator's spouse, although this too did not occur until late spring of 1998, at the end of the 4th quarter. In a further, tragic, event, World Concern suffered from the sudden death of their Asia Area Director. *The resulting organizational readjustments required for World Concern, not to mention the personal grieving of staff, continued to hamper management efforts*

As a stop-gap measure for the vacant project coordinator position in Da Nang, the program manager in Hanoi undertook the additional burden of traveling between the two locations to monitor the projects and manage local staff. Although the trips were extremely useful, they were not frequent enough. This required the local staff to fill in as best they could and it increased their work burden immensely. The staff did an admirable job and the situation gave them a unique opportunity to shine. But the fact still remains, *without a consistent management presence there were some aspects of the project that fell through the gaps, most relating to relationship-building with project partners and monitoring of project status*. If World Concern management personnel had been available, they may have foreseen some of the troubles brewing with their project partners in Hien and could have intervened sooner. Likewise, the curriculum problems with student training and the VAC system would more likely have been identified earlier had there been a continual management presence.

2.2 World Concern's Staff Capacity

Since 1992, World Concern has been expanding its local staff size slowly, with a concerted emphasis on developing the skills and expertise of those they do have rather than simply growing in size. *World Concern has been extremely thorough and focused in its internal hiring decisions, which has ultimately resulted in an exceptional local staff who understand the project and possess a strong commitment to its development. In fact, the World Concern team certainly represents one of the most important assets to the program*

On-the-job training and mentorship, in combination with formal professional training, characterize much of World Concern's staff development activities. Now, after nearly six years of project implementation, many are well versed on their work and some have assumed critical roles in project management. Nonetheless, the detailed, technical knowledge of the staff, most pointedly in the areas of community work and agricultural and animal husbandry training, is just beginning. *As the project moves along the growth continuum and as USAID's and World Concern's objectives change, so must the emphasis of staff development*. This may include a change from district to community level implementation, from vocational training to agricultural and animal husbandry training, or from CEDC to CEDC with disabilities. It is now time to focus staff development efforts on more technical areas of training, such as disability awareness and specialization, grassroots implementation and organization, and understanding of agricultural and veterinary skills.

This said, often specialized PVO projects suffer from a lack of personnel who understand and have training in social development-related skills. *Integrating staff with the necessary technical skills into situations where they must understand the dynamics and complexities of the lives of poor, marginalized youth and their families at the grassroots level represents one of the greatest challenges for many projects. So far, World Concern has taken steps to avoid these complications*. At this stage, World Concern should make sure to continue the successful efforts they have made in developing these social development skills through their social work training program, taking care to include their own internal, local staff. Ultimately, it is a comprehensive staff development approach that can be the most effective.

2.2.1 Personnel Turnover in Local Personnel

In addition to the management difficulties outlined in Section 2.1 above, World Concern suffered from troubles with their local agricultural/ veterinary specialist, whom they had hired during the most recent grant period. *The hiring was completed in the 2nd quarter in response to the troubles brewing in Hien and the needs in Tuyen Quang, as a means for better influencing and monitoring key technical components of the agricultural and animal husbandry project objectives*. Careful planning, detailed research and extensive interviewing went into this placement decision. After such consideration, World Concern decided upon a particular individual with excellent English skills, extensive experience in community-based work, and well-qualified in agriculture and animal husbandry.

In eager anticipation of the potential for this staff position, World Concern developed a work plan that included training, monitoring and follow-up, and technical assistance to project partners. Although the new specialist got off to an excellent start, completing a curriculum assessment and providing follow-up training to students in Hien and Tuyen Quang, it was

short-lived, lasting no longer than the end of the year. *After a couple months of diminishing appearances, and without providing any forewarning or basis for the decision, the newly hired specialist simply withdrew from World Concern's employ in January, 1998.*

World Concern was once again back at the drawing board, with no agricultural/veterinary specialist to provide much-needed follow-up and technical support to project partners. This was exacerbated by the limitations in management in Da Nang. And, in a final blow, the planned periodic visits of foreign shuttle veterinarians ultimately only occurred once, and this at the close of the grant period. Ultimately, the combination of these unanticipated situations significantly affected the delivery of much needed technical support and specialized training at the new project sites in Tuyen Quang and Hien (see Section III, subsection 2.2.2, page 11).

3 Support and Cooperation of Project Partners

Project partner capacity is a key factor in determining the project's sustainability and expansion. *As World Concern has learned in many lessons past, their approach to building a long-lasting human resource base with project partners is perhaps one of their most challenging and important tasks.* It presents the most significant way in which the project's vision is interpreted and applied. Because of this, it is critical to try to understand some of the factors influencing project partner support and cooperation during this and other grant periods. Understanding these factors can serve to enhance World Concern's future efforts to develop project partner capacity.

3.1 A Human Focus

The sense of 'human quality' among project partners is crucial for this project and it can only operate effectively by establishing a strong common bond with, and between, the beneficiaries. *In short, the project partner staff must share a common sense of commitment to both the project and the CEDC with whom they work.*

This general philosophy can serve to inform the general attitudes of World Concern project partners towards CEDC, although it is also important to recognize the role that cultural influence has on such attitudes. *In Vietnam, the combination of socialist and traditional, patriarchal (Confucian) philosophies affect the general approach currently being applied in the delivery of social services and in the development of national policy in Vietnam.*

Although great strides have been made to positively influence such approaches, in part through the efforts of PVOs like World Concern, it seems that the level of awareness and education of project partners regarding the situation and capabilities of the poor in general and CEDC in particular remains uninformed. *Few project partners view their mandate as an opportunity to empower beneficiaries and assist them in achieving a level of self-reliance.* The result is that programs for CEDC are often given low priority on a national policy level and when programs are developed, they tend to be short-term and are often not comprehensive.

3.2 Creativity as a Mechanism in Project Management

As mentioned earlier in this report, the formal education system in Vietnam does not generally foster a creative and analytical approach to work. Additionally, project partners often depend upon hiring those who have proven, "politically correct" track records (such as membership in the Communist Party), connections to the appropriate officials, or influential family members. Given the core philosophies influencing government and policy outlined above, *it is much easier to find staff who will follow instructions without questioning, rather than persons who will reflect critically on their work and contribute to improving it.* Fostering these characteristics in project partner staff through workshops and regular, informal interactions may help to contribute to establishing a more effective, community-focused system of operations.

3.3 The Impact of Provincial Reorganization

An additional factor which has wreaked havoc on World Concern's implementation efforts has been the tendency of the government to suddenly and without forewarning change their provincial boundaries. In such situations, provinces are unexpectedly divided into two, causing the sudden reorganization of provincial and district governments, maddening halts in administrative procedures, impromptu scrambling for the reallocation of scant human and physical resources, and generally resulting in temporary, but extremely disruptive government shutdowns. It seems that such changes occur about as rapidly as Vietnam's population increases and moves. Unfortunately, these provincial divisions have left World Concern in difficult quandaries time and again. During the current grant period, World Concern experienced this phenomenon in Hien.

World Concern spent many years developing trusting, open relationships with officials from DET in Quang Nam Da Nang Province, which initially included Hien. However, by the time World Concern had begun implementing the Hien project, Quang Nam Da Nang had been divided, separating Quang Nam (including Hien) from Da Nang City and creating a new provincial capital in Tam Ky. All previously nurtured relationships with officials from the old provincial capital in Da Nang were, in effect, moot and new efforts had to be made to develop cooperative associations with a new cast of players.

Unfortunately, these relationship-building efforts never did go very well. *The complicated and distant proximity of the new capital in Tam Ky to the project site, in combination with extremely poor traveling conditions, meant that provincial officials were reluctant to work on the project, let alone travel to the site.* World Concern found themselves depending far too heavily on lower level officials with limited influence to assist with project implementation and administration. Even during the financial crisis with the school principal in Hien, DET officials from Tam Ky failed to respond satisfactorily. Given the added problems with expatriate staffing, this situation led to the continuing woes of the project – and the Hien beneficiaries (particularly the first group) were the ones who suffered the most, in terms of not benefiting from the project as intended.

3.4 The Nature of Project Partner Relationships

Especially during this grant period, World Concern sought to expand its focus of operation from the provincial and district levels to the community level, but not without numerous complications with project partners. *World Concern seemingly has no flexibility in changing its GSRV sponsorship from a project partner like MOLISA to another, perhaps more appropriate, Ministry, such as MOET (Ministry of Education and Training) or PACCOM (the People's Aid Coordination Committee). This mandatory relationship means that World Concern is required to work in MOLISA-approved provinces, with MOLISA-determined staff and managers, and on a specific MOLISA-sanctioned project focus.*

When World Concern sought to break out of this pre-determined mold, MOLISA often responded by "making life difficult" for them. For example, when World Concern began its project for ethnic minorities in Lai Chau Province upon the recommendation of PACCOM and with funding from AUSAID (Australian Aid Organization), MOLISA responded with reluctant approval, but then refused to issue visas to World Concern expatriate project implementers. MOLISA's influence is also expanding politically on a national level. *Sponsorship through MOLISA, then, seems unavoidable, but nevertheless represents a continuous complication in World Concern project implementation.*

Another important factor influencing project implementation, especially in the new community-based expansion effort of this grant period, relates to the dilemma of locating community-based project partners without offending MOLISA. *Inter-Ministry and interagency cooperation or shared project ownership in Vietnam is extremely complex and troublesome for PVOs, in part because it requires shared responsibility of project partners and thus exposes one governmental agency to potential criticism from the other.* Ultimately, this creates extremely perplexing administrative and implementation problems for World Concern's community-based projects because DOLISA does not operate at the commune level. In order to effectively implement the community-based projects in Hien and Tuyen Quang, World Concern had to develop project partnerships with authorities from the APC, the CPCC, and/or the DET, while at the same time trying to pacify the sensibilities of DOLISA. *This often makes World Concern's work with DOLISA tenuous, and will most certainly be a factor in future projects in the new program, especially with the planned emphasis on community-based implementation.*

3.5 The Impact of Project Partner Suspected Corruption and Mismanagement

This topic, always an uncomfortable one, nevertheless requires at least a brief discussion as it permeates most aspects of the current project, and affects the end results. The program experienced two specific events involving project partners that disrupted or significantly delayed activities during this grant period, one at the overall provincial level and the other on a very direct project level. In each of these instances, and at other project sites, mismanagement has, in varying degrees, also impacted project outcomes.

In the first instance, the World Concern program was one of many PVO victims in Thai Binh province when villagers began a large-scale protest against the local People's Committee and the government authorities. This protest began in response to the alleged embezzlement of foreign aid funds that were to be targeted for infrastructure projects to benefit local people in the communes. In the midst of the protest, World Concern's project and other aid programs operating in the area were suddenly and permanently terminated. (See also Section V, subsection 2.1, on page 23.)

In the second instance, World Concern experienced major problems in Hien with the purported corruption involving the principal of the Ethnic Minority Boarding School. In this case, the problem was much closer to home, directly involving World Concern's aid project and funds. As described in Section III, subsection 2.2.5, on page 13, the school principal had a relatively unbalanced share of individual power in the project, which caused a struggle for control, especially over World Concern funds. Ultimately, after extensive delays and extremely poor training and income generation results, the principal was removed and is currently under investigation for corruption. The lingering effect of this scandal has already done extensive damage to the Hien project.

Thus the problems caused by suspected corruption and mismanagement by project partners resulted in the complete halt of one project (with subsequent relocation of these activities to Tuyen Quang), and created delays, mistrust, suspicion, and staff headaches, and required much reinvestment of effort and funds, in the other project. World Concern could never have foreseen the troublesome minefield that lay ahead of them with their project partners in either Thai Binh or Hien. *Corruption and mismanagement is not an uncommon problem in foreign projects of all kinds, including business and aid projects alike. It certainly affects domestic projects in Vietnam as well.* However, there are steps that can be taken to identify these pitfalls much earlier and, when they do occur (and they are sure to continue), to respond with speed and greater fluidity.

4 Unfinished Business Supporting the Projects of the Past

4.1 Time Constraints

One of the greatest challenges for World Concern in this project was the time constraints based on obligations to USAID. World Concern faced an 18-month time frame under which they had to research project location and need, negotiate agreements, develop trusting relationships with new project partners, train project partner staff, create effective plans, implement the project, address unexpected developments, finalize the project, and assess results. *This is a massive undertaking in any situation, but especially so when attempting to implement a project in Vietnam, where planning is particularly challenging within the context of differing cultural assumptions regarding the value of time.*

World Concern had created the new vocational training and income generation models with the thought that future grants from USAID would likely permit ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the activities initiated in this grant extension period. However, owing to the changes in the characteristics of USAID DCOF target beneficiaries, this was not to be. Ultimately, the new project activities that World Concern expected to continue in terms of monitoring and evaluation were rather swiftly ended.

Some of the effects of these time constraints are outlined in the sections below and represent areas where World Concern's continuing involvement is still essential for project success.

4.2 The Hoi An Accelerated Teacher's Training Program

One of the programs that would benefit significantly from continued World Concern involvement is the Accelerated Teacher's Training (TT) Program for 40 ethnic minority students at Hoi An Residential School. This unique, highly successful endeavor was the first project model for combining high-school education with primary-school teachers' training methodologies in the region and nationwide. The success and appreciation of the project has been reported by MOET and by the Minister himself. *It is considered an important model in Vietnam. This is particularly so because it has become the quickest, most effective way to train the teachers from mountainous, ethnic regions where the critical need for teachers is obvious. Additionally, the model's sustainability is also invaluable for the purposes of local application.*

The World Concern approach not only met the local objectives of the school, i.e. training teachers from mountainous regions, but also offered students general education in combination with teacher training so that they could become elementary teachers in their home communities. The 7-year training program (4 for basic education and 3 for teacher's training) contained most of the components suggested in the body of this Evaluation for application at other training sites: longer-term and more applicable training, comprehensive instruction, extensive extracurricular support, well-qualified teachers, and a sense of empowerment among the students. These project characteristics gave the added advantage of ensuring a higher possibility for graduate success. In the end, 100% of the students passed their exams and 100% have returned to their communities and are either currently teaching, or have expressed a desire to become teachers. *Subsequent to World Concern's involvement, the DET has provided the funding and approval for two more classes for 110 more students using the successful model at the school.*

During Evaluation interviews, the graduates explained some of the challenges they faced during their training and voiced their concerns for future students. The most commonly expressed concern was related to the workload of the students. *Although they felt very proud of their accomplishments and were extremely enthusiastic about the continuation of the program, they said they struggled daily to keep up with their assignments*, which were doubled because of their unique status as general education and teacher training students.

It is very necessary to continue this program, but we are very concerned about the huge amount of work required of the students. There was so much information for us to learn that there was no way to absorb it all. Because of this we were always discouraged and worried about our results. Our teachers were also worried and helped us a lot with this issue. The school is now offering this training to more students. But we think they should wait a couple years to see how well we do before repeating it for others. This way it can be adapted if necessary.

— 1998 Ethnic Ka Tu Hoi An TT Graduates

The students had no time for rest or relaxation of any kind and needed extensive extra help from each other and their teachers. They also confirmed World Concern's earlier suspicions that *their ethnicity and limited exposure to the larger world (as mountainous peoples) significantly complicated their capacity to understand Kinh teaching methodologies. This was exacerbated by their relocation to Hoi An from their homes for 7 years, at very young ages.* Many said it was at least two years before their sense of homesickness began to ease.

Although all the students successfully completed the program, the challenges facing these fledgling teachers upon their return to their communities were massive. Believing that they would begin their teaching commitments in a student-teacher setting, with the assistance of older, more experienced mentors, most graduates were surprised when they were immediately thrown into their teaching roles completely on their own. *Working in some of the harshest conditions imaginable, these new, very young teachers have struggled enormously to meet the needs of their students and are frustrated by the difficulties facing them.*

Since September, 1998, the new teachers have managed classes of 30 or more students for grade two or three, which includes at least nine subjects. The teachers must walk anywhere from 30 to 70 minutes each way to the schools, which are overcrowded with only 2 classrooms per school. All teachers interviewed said they had to help their families with daily farming in addition to teaching. At the time of the interviews, they explained that they had not been paid in the month and a half since they had begun teaching, which is traditionally the case during the teaching practice phase. Most importantly, the new teachers face severe shortages of supplies, especially books, with only enough for 30% of all students, if that. This is complicated by the challenges that the teachers face with students who have had very poor education prior to participating in their classes.

It is within this context that a follow-up and monitoring role for World Concern is most needed in the ethnic minority Teacher's Training project. *Without continuing support and an extended monitoring presence, the progress that World Concern has made in developing such an effective model may be lost. More significantly, there is a unique opportunity to build upon the momentum and enthusiasm that already exists in the recent empowerment of these new, young teachers in their own communities. It should be acted upon now, before it's too late.*

4.3 Project Monitoring and Follow-Up

World Concern has always had strength in their ability to respond effectively to lessons learned in past experiences. Not unsurprisingly then, this has been the case during the current grant period. It is not to say that such efforts have always been successful or have not experienced problems along the way, but rather that World Concern consistently demonstrates a willingness to change their approach and adapt to the demands of the project characteristics. Nowhere is this more evident than in their increased efforts to develop and enhance their monitoring program.

Based largely upon recommendations from the Mid-Term Evaluation in 1997, World Concern completed the following actions to improve their monitoring efforts: 1) follow-up trainings, 2) needs-assessments prior to new project implementation, 3) surveys of beneficiary status, 4) technical evaluations, 5) consolidation of project sites, and 6) regular visits to sites by project officers. *For the most part, these efforts were successful and addressed the critical need for*

better follow-up and monitoring. More importantly, World Concern learned many valuable lessons from their forays into this area.

The most notable of these lessons was the importance of regular monitoring of project efforts and outcomes. *Although these initiatives had a successful beginning, there is cause for concern that the new projects are now at the stage where monitoring and evaluation become critical. Unfortunately, the grant period ended before any impact of the new project endeavors could effectively be experienced, let alone assessed.* Especially at the Tuyen Quang and Hien sites, World Concern has established unique initiatives which require continued monitoring and follow-up, especially the VAC system for income generation, the microcredit Cow Bank project for families, and the community-based agricultural and animal husbandry training. *There are crucial lessons to be learned in monitoring these projects which can apply directly in endeavors of the new grant, especially as they relate to the community-based aspects of it*

4.3.1 The Need to Involve Project Partners

Time and again World Concern discovered that without their direct supervision and close involvement in project implementation, project objectives are either only partially accomplished, if at all, or unsatisfactorily so. Tuyen Quang was a case in point. When World Concern spent increased amounts of time at the site, improvements were made in project implementation and information was shared more readily as trust between the partners grew. More importantly, when the project partners and local implementers became involved and began to feel a commitment towards the goals of the project and the beneficiaries, the project experienced more success.

From examples such as this, it seems clear that the project partners need to be more involved in the monitoring and evaluation components. In this area perhaps World Concern needs to expand its efforts. *Many World Concern staff expressed their concerns during the Evaluation that project partners don't really know or understand World Concern's role, let alone the specific project objectives.* This is because project partners are not truly involved in the planning and evaluation phases of the project. It is simply not enough to verbally inform the project partners of World Concern's program goals during formal meetings with DET or DOLISA. Such actions increase the likelihood of communication gaps and misunderstandings.

The project partners need to be involved from the very beginning in a hands-on, participatory manner. This ensures that not only do they understand the objectives, but they are involved in the design of the project, they begin to feel they are part of what makes it happen, and they have a stake in the outcomes. They are, after all, project stakeholders, too. *Although such efforts may be more challenging at the provincial or even district level, it is particularly critical at the community level where such involvement can represent the difference between success and failure.* This will be critical in the new World Concern/USAID program.

IX RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS THE FUTURE - A NEW PROGRAM BEGINS

1 Formal Vocational Skills Training

- ♦ Training periods should be lengthened, not shortened. Regardless of age or educational level, the more training provided the better the skill development. 9 months should be the *shortest* length of time for *any* skills training for CEDC, and this too is questionable. It cannot be emphasized enough how important this factor will be when working with AWD during the new grant. The obstacles that AWD will have to overcome will be even more challenging than with CEDC.
- ♦ Continue to expand and repeat life skills training at all sites. It should be implemented not just at the end of World Concern involvement, but during the skills training itself. It will serve as a key component in the community-based nature of the new program initiatives, and can encourage project partners to use participatory methodologies in their work with CEDC or AWD.
- ♦ Continue to re-focus skills training on venues and skills that are more applicable to CEDC. World Concern should attempt to provide apprenticeships for skills training rather than formal classroom venues. This is especially important during the new program when training AWD who will require more comprehensive individual assistance than CEDC.
- ♦ Clarify the definition of "CEDC" and the conditions of providing "scholarships" between MOLISA and World Concern/USAID to ensure compatibility and mutual understanding. Additionally, solidify World Concern's own understanding of the type of CEDC whom they wish to target (e.g., the most needy or only more educated CEDC).

- ♦ Questions to consider when determining the type of skills training to provide may include 1) Are these the most appropriate skills for CEDC or AWD to learn? 2) How are they applicable in the lives of the beneficiaries? 3) What are the local job opportunities? 4) What is local-market demand? 5) Is it cost-effective? 6) What impact will the current economic crisis have on beneficiaries with this type of training?

2 Alternative Livelihood Skills Training

- ♦ Repeat/continue efforts to develop alternative skills training in areas such as animal husbandry or agriculture. Special creativity must be used in the new program in training AWD according to the strengths and limitations involved with each disability.
- ♦ Ensure that hands-on practice opportunities become a major component of the agricultural/animal husbandry training curriculum. The importance of practice was made very clear during the Hien experience. In the new program, working with AWD whose education levels are likely to be low and for whom the social and economic barriers are extreme, even more learning opportunities through direct practice will be required.
- ♦ Future beneficiaries will also require a certain amount of training in theory. In these cases it will be helpful to utilize participatory methodologies wherever possible. It was also evident that group training was a very helpful aspect of the training for CEDC. This will also be critical for AWD who often have very few opportunities for social interaction, especially with other AWD. If not through training, this should be provided through the development of support networks or groups.
- ♦ Enhance agricultural and animal husbandry training by having the students make field visits to local farmers and by targeting training according to age group and/or education level (but do not refuse beneficiaries who are more limited in these areas). During the new program it may also be necessary to divide some training groups according to disability.
- ♦ At this stage in the project it is difficult to determine how dependent the agricultural/animal husbandry training graduates are on the commune workers. World Concern should try to monitor how self-sufficient the graduates actually become.
- ♦ Continue to implement life skills training and the social development aspects for CEDC beneficiaries. In fact, the life skills training content should be expanded. This is especially important with new AWD beneficiaries who specifically require social interaction opportunities with their peers and communities, training in basic life skills, enhanced self-esteem, and independence. The development of community-based support groups or networks will strengthen such training for new AWD beneficiaries.

3 Job Placement and Technical Assistance

- ♦ Develop more project partner and beneficiary participation in project development and planning, especially in the community-based projects. Involving the beneficiaries will enhance project application and provide a balance to project partner influence.
- ♦ If relationships with the JSCs must continue, the type of World Concern support provided should be re-evaluated, especially as it relates to the cost-effectiveness of contributing large outlays for training equipment. Such an assessment should consider
 - ◊ the continued consolidation of World Concern project sites at JSCs or minority schools
 - ◊ a long-term (5 year) commitment by World Concern at sites where equipment is provided
 - ◊ the development of direct links between formal JSC training to job placement or apprenticeships
 - ◊ intensive World Concern oversight and involvement at any JSC or minority school site
 - ◊ more participation and training of the project partners in project planning, implementation and evaluation
 - ◊ an increase in the number of CEDC scholarships currently required of project partners as a condition of providing equipment
- ♦ Job placement will be an increasingly difficult factor in the new program when AWD need to secure job placement or income generation opportunities for improving their livelihood. Extensive efforts will be needed to develop creative solutions to this challenge.

4 Start-Up Assistance for Beneficiaries

- ♦ Inputs provided in Tuyen Quang have, thus far, been effective, while they did not have a significant impact in Hien. Such lessons indicate that World Concern needs to be more responsive to the capacities of the families to

successfully raise certain breeds of livestock. For example, breeds with high risk of disease should weigh more heavily in decision-making than something like short-term profitability.

- ♦ Providing two different kinds of inputs at the same time was rather effective and should be further examined as a viable mechanism in start-up assistance for agriculture and animal husbandry training beneficiaries.
- ♦ The efficacy of the inputs depends highly upon the effectiveness of training provided. If training results are poor, the distribution of start-up inputs may need to be delayed until students and their families are better able to utilize the inputs after additional training. This will reduce loss of inputs due to inappropriate care and other preventable complications.

5 Income Generation for Project Partners

- ♦ As World Concern is aware, the cow projects as income generation activities for the JSCs were not effective and should not be repeated. At Phuoc Son and Giang, however, these projects were more successful. This may indicate that faulty decisions and poor management by the JSCs was partially responsible for the insufficient results.
- ♦ The key to success when using livestock in income generation seems to be: 1) the close proximity of project partners to the herds, 2) direct, regular involvement in daily herd management by project partners, 3) commitment to the activity by the project partners, 4) where possible, beneficiary responsibility for individual livestock care, and 5), use of the livestock for training practice. These factors all contribute to the usefulness of the livestock beyond the basic income generating purpose.
- ♦ The VAC system should be repeated at other project sites even though it has not been fully proven in Hien. The effectiveness of the VAC system has been demonstrated time and again in other PVO programs. The VAC system will be especially helpful at sites where agriculture and animal husbandry training, or a microcredit program like the Cow Bank, is implemented or where practice is part of the curriculum requirement. It may also hold potential as an alternative to the usual income generation activities at the JSCs and the minority schools.
- ♦ Collective management of the IGAs is very difficult to control. For this reason, it may be more effective to develop an approach that relies in part on individual family care of livestock to ensure more effective herd development. World Concern may also be able to build on this by designating responsibility for the IGA animals to each student participating in the training program (under regular, direct supervision by a JSC or minority school).

6 Community-Based Income Generation Projects

- ♦ The Cow Bank as a viable microcredit program should be expanded and enhanced during the new program period. Using livestock or agricultural inputs is much more applicable in the lives of rural, poor beneficiaries and offers them a sense of empowerment and control over their own lives.
- ♦ World Concern should consider building upon the use of commune workers in project implementation. It is a program strength that offers the potential for empowerment at a local level and appears to be more effective than the typical district-level project focus. However, it also requires close monitoring and involvement on the part of World Concern.
- ♦ It is extremely important to try to involve local people, especially ethnic minorities, in project administration and implementation. It was also particularly helpful to use local project partners, like the APC and the CPCC. Such efforts are likely to ensure more effective mutual understanding and cooperation between implementers and beneficiaries, will reduce mistrust, and will enhance community interest and support. For the same reasons, it will be important in the new program to involve PWD and/or family members with a disabled relative in project administration and implementation wherever possible, and to develop working relationships with new project partners like the IFRC.
- ♦ Ensure that training for microcredit beneficiaries is long enough, that the content is sufficient, and that appropriate pre- and post-testing is done. The services of a technician may be required to assist in the development of this component.

7 Professional Training and Development

- ♦ Continue to support the SWTG, especially through internship placements. This can be especially valuable for community-based and participatory training during the new program period. The use of interns as trainers is crucial in developing project partner skills for working directly with CEDC or AWD.
- ♦ Build upon current PVO cooperation and support of the SWTG, especially as it relates to community-based rehabilitation and disability awareness training.

- ♦ Enhance capacity building of the SWTG Master-Trainers in developing appropriate social work methodologies and university-level curricula. These professional skills can then be used as mechanisms for improving social service delivery, especially in terms of community-based project implementation, on a national level.
- ♦ The social work interns provide a cost-effective means for enhancing World Concern's training initiatives for project partner capacity-building. It will be especially important to utilize this mutually beneficial relationship as the training needs of World Concern staff and their project partners continue to expand in the new program and as the demands on the current World Concern trainer become overwhelming. This may also be accomplished by providing additional World Concern local staff to assist the trainer.
- ♦ TOT for project partners created a unique cooperative mechanism to work together, to learn more about social service delivery, to enhance the human aspects of their work, and to become more involved in the projects. Training in participatory methodologies, life skills, basic social work theory, and techniques for working directly with CEDC should be repeated and expanded to also include disability awareness and community-based rehabilitation.
- ♦ If possible, World Concern may want to consider including project partners from the original JSCs and minority schools in capacity-building activities during the new program. This will offer a means for continuity and sharing of experiences between the old and new project partners.
- ♦ During the new program it will be critical to involve a technician or professional consultant with community-based rehabilitation and/or disability program expertise in TOT, project design and planning.

8 World Concern's Project Management Capacity

- ♦ Establish more responsive mechanisms and specific procedures for addressing both local and expatriate staffing problems. For example, establish clear trial periods or in-country arrival deadlines based upon project implementation timeframes. Additionally, always maintain a list of staff alternatives in case of unanticipated problems.
- ♦ In advance of project implementation, identify and secure qualified experts to complete technical evaluation or training tasks.
- ♦ Where possible, build upon existing support systems during project implementation. For example, MOLISA commitments and previous program experience from other PVOs is, in part, what has made the Cow Bank successful thus far. It is also what made the VAC system in other PVO projects effective. During the new program, World Concern can utilize such support and previous experience that will accompany the national community-based rehabilitation mandate.
- ♦ USAID's 18-month DCOF project deadlines and related reporting requirements are extremely ambitious. Often this means that DCOF funding recipients in Vietnam have great difficulties effectively completing project implementation according to schedule. Additionally, the process for securing continuing USAID funding beyond the 18-month activity period is uncertain and diverts a significant amount of staff time from project implementation to proposal research and writing. Because of this, World Concern may want to reassess project implementation objectives to more suitably fit within the DCOF deadlines. This could require a reduction in the number and/or scope of expected project outcomes and almost certainly will require a realistic extension of implementation commitments. It may also require the hiring of additional staff.
- ♦ A clear system for record maintenance needs to be developed at World Concern to ensure easy and immediate access to information for monitoring purposes. For example, cumulative records on equipment provisions, training and scholarship costs-to-date, agricultural and livestock inputs, and beneficiary status should be maintained on an appropriate database.
- ♦ Develop funding sources to continue support to the new ethnic minority teachers who recently graduated from the Hoi An Teacher's Training program. World Concern may want to provide classroom and student supplies, training aids, and books. World Concern involvement should also include continuing follow-up and monitoring of project impact. A more thorough needs-assessment should accompany any continuing aid.

9 Project Partner Management Capacity

- ♦ There is no way for World Concern to predict potential for corruption or internal political power struggles with project partners in advance of their involvement in a project. But it is important to recognize the significant impact of such misfortunes on project implementation, and especially on the beneficiaries. World Concern can try to be particularly cautious of these when encountering inexplicable delays and problems with project implementation. In

this way, World Concern may then constructively respond to or even defuse problems more rapidly and/or develop creative alternatives as they occur

- ♦ One important key to truly understanding what is going on in any type of project in Vietnam is to become very familiar with all project actors, not just those in powerful positions. It is important to note that communication in Vietnam is not accomplished through the spoken or written word as much as it is in the development of relationships
- ♦ World Concern staff felt that the project partners really didn't understand what World Concern's true purpose was. This can only be changed if project partners are involved in as many aspects of the project as possible, including the planning and evaluating process
- ♦ At the same time, World Concern needs to be more directly involved at the project sites themselves in a supervisory capacity. More control does not necessarily mean reduced sustainability. Rather, it may offer greater capacity to identify and respond to problems sooner and more effectively
- ♦ World Concern should take the opportunity presented in beginning the new program to try to diversify their project partners. Although it is clear they will also have to maintain their relationship with, some decision-making power should be shifted to other project partners at the commune level in order to create more project management balance
- ♦ Encourage project partners, during the new program, to share their experiences and opinions on project direction through participatory training and program involvement as a means of reducing potential conflicts between the various project actors (i.e., DOLISA, DET, CPCC, APC and the IFRC)
- ♦ World Concern should continue its efforts to build local capacity by continuing to focus on project partner professional development and by offering joint participatory training between World Concern staff and project partners in program design, planning, implementation and especially monitoring
- ♦ World Concern should try to develop a means for becoming more influential with project partners in terms of determining CEDC selection, job placement and skill training decisions
- ♦ Project emphasis on a grassroots approach should be expanded for the following reasons: 1) it is more applicable in the lives of beneficiaries, 2) it is more realistic and flexible, and 3) because the project partners, beneficiaries and the local communities are more committed to its success

10 Monitoring and Follow-Up

- ♦ There is an urgent need to develop specific impact indicators for all beneficiaries and project components to measure the effectiveness of World Concern interventions. Such indicators should include pre- and post-testing of beneficiaries, such as a uniform grading system, and should possess the capacity to measure impact on a scale
- ♦ Performance indicators should be as quantitative as possible to indicate change or improvement in all project initiatives, including job placement, training effectiveness, income generation activities, the VAC system, microcredit programs, and project partner capacity building. However, qualitative measurements, such as quality-of-life impact or attitude indicators, will also play an important role
- ♦ World Concern should implement uniform testing mechanisms for their skills training courses at all sites as soon as possible. This has been especially lacking for the alternative skills training and in the community-based microcredit training for families. Such a system may use traditional written or oral examinations. Alternatively, more creative testing methods are needed, such as a hands-on practical test (example: giving an inoculation to a calf), a final project assignment (example: the successful hatching of ducklings or a verbal presentation on how to plant cassava), or a cumulative record (example: the proper maintenance of a piglet's growth chart)
- ♦ The graduate follow-up survey was generally very successful as a mechanism for monitoring intervention impact and should be expanded in the new program. Efforts should be made to complete surveys like this during the program, as well as at the end. Also important is the need for more direct World Concern involvement in conducting these surveys and training project partners on survey objectives and techniques to ensure more uniform and thorough assessment
- ♦ Ensure that baseline surveys or needs-assessments are conducted prior to beginning project implementation. Such surveys should incorporate participatory methodologies at the community level by including project partners, CEDC, AWD, and families
- ♦ Continue to monitor the projects in Hien and Tuyen Quang to determine their continued impact on the beneficiaries. Monitoring will be particularly helpful for the Cow Bank, the agricultural and animal husbandry

training for CEDC and their families, and the VAC system. The lessons learned from this will provide valuable information for project implementation during the new program period.

- ♦ The project requires improved technical monitoring that is more timely and fluid.
- ♦ Follow-up should be completed for an equal number of beneficiaries from each project period and should not be unduly influenced by project partner management turn-over, as it was in Hien, (see section III, subsection 2.2.5) or graduate relocation to the cities. World Concern should complete such follow-up themselves in these cases, as they have done for Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan and Quang Ngai graduates who went to work in Ho Chi Minh City.
- ♦ Future evaluations should be more participatory by including project partners, World Concern staff, and even beneficiaries as part of an evaluation team. In addition to the typical function of providing quantitative and qualitative assessment, such evaluations should be more educational in nature for all project actors.

11 Project Logistics

- ♦ Maintain current efforts to consolidate project sites in order to enhance monitoring and direct World Concern project involvement.
- ♦ Ensure that project sites are within closer proximity to World Concern offices for more effective and regular visits. This is especially important when initiating new programs and may help to create more mutual understanding and trust between World Concern and their project partners.
- ♦ Develop scheduling mechanisms to reduce stress of travel on project officers. This could include a flex-time system or may require additional local staff. World Concern may also need to assist project partner staff in alleviating scheduling difficulties in terms of conflicts between World Concern and project partner job responsibilities. This could be mitigated in part by improving inter-commune transportation.

Endnotes

- ¹ The total was derived using the following data contained in the table in Appendix 1, entitled *Project Accomplishments* 175 skills training recipients (cells 1, 2 and 8) + 56 job placement support/other assistance recipients (cells 6, 9, 14, 17, and 20) + 274 follow-up and life-skills training recipients (cells 5, 12, 15, 18,21) + 152 microcredit recipients (cell 3), MINUS repeat beneficiaries in cells 5, 6, and 9 (91, total) = 566 direct beneficiaries
- ² General Statistics Office of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, *Implementation of Mid-Decade Goals for Vietnamese Children by 1995 Analysis and Evaluation* Hanoi, Vietnam, (December, 1996), pp 12-15
- ³ Ibid , pp 16-17
- ⁴ Ibid , p 57
- ⁵ Ibid , pp 20-21
- ⁶ Ibid , pp 54
- ⁷ World Concern Development Organization, *USAID Grant Proposal for RFA No 410-95-A-010* (July 1996), pp 4-6
- ⁸ Ibid , p 6
- ⁹ World Concern Development Organization, *Matrix and Preference Rankings for Hien Animal Husbandry Program* Da Nang, Vietnam (August, 1997)
- ¹⁰ General Statistics Office of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, *Implementation of Mid-Decade Goals for Vietnamese Children by 1995 Analysis and Evaluation* Hanoi, Vietnam, (December 1996), pp 19 and 34
- ¹¹ Ibid , pp 35-37
- ¹² World Concern, *Protocol of Agreement on the Working Capital at the Job Service Center in Tuyen Quang Province* Hanoi, Vietnam, (September 27, 1997), pp 1-2
- ¹³ UNICEF, *Life Skills for Young Ugandans*, (date and page unknown)

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APPENDIX 1.

Project Accomplishments from 1 April, 1997 through 30 September, 1998

The following calculations were gathered from Evaluation interviews and bi-monthly, quarterly or annual project site reports. The number of beneficiaries listed may have been counted more than once between different categories. For example, some CEDC who were counted under vocational training also were counted under ABE assistance. All CEDC listed below who received direct assistance also received indirect assistance via the income generation projects, new equipment, etc. Indirect beneficiaries, such as the ethnic minority children at the boarding schools or the fee-paying students at the Job Service Centers who benefit from the provision of new equipment and income generation inputs for project partners, were only roughly estimated based on overall student populations during the school year.

Beneficiaries Assisted by WCDO during Current Grant Period

Cell No.	Beneficiaries Assisted	WCDO Project Site	Type of Assistance
1	12 CEDC	Tuyen Quang job service center	Vocational skills training (6 receive job placement)
2	76 CEDC	Tuyen Quang community-based training sites	Livelihood skills training and animal or agricultural inputs (2 piglets and 15 to 25 trees each)
3	152 families	Tuyen Quang Cow Bank	Microcredit (1 young cow each) and community-based agricultural training
4	4 commune workers	Tuyen Quang community-based training sites	Training-of-trainers in animal husbandry and agricultural training and in microcredit
5	61 CEDC students (subset of cell 2 above)	Tuyen Quang community-based training program and JSC	Follow-up and life skills training
6	2 CEDC (subset of cell 2 above)	Tuyen Quang JSC	Alternative Basic Education (ABE) Training
7	Approximately 350 JSC students per academic year	Tuyen Quang JSC	Indirect support through technical assistance and new equipment or inputs (consumables, 12 sewing machines, 2 specialty sewing machines, 1 iron, 10 computers, 1 CD-ROM, 5 UPS, 1 stabilizer, a printer, 2 welding machines and 1 motorbike for commune workers)
8	87 CEDC (28 in the 1st course, 59 in the second)	Hien Minority School	Agricultural/animal husbandry training, animal or agricultural inputs (20 baby chicks or ducklings, or 1 piglet and 10 chicks per student), and vet supplies and info leaflets
9	28 CEDC (subset of cell 8 above)	Hien communes	Follow-up/repeat agricultural and animal husbandry training for first summer course graduates, including animal or agricultural inputs (20 baby chicks or ducklings, or 1 piglet and 10 chicks per student), and vet supplies and info leaflets
10	1 Ethnic Minority Boarding School	Hien	Facility renovations to ensure healthy, safe CEDC living and education

(Continued)

Cell No.	Beneficiaries Assisted	WCDO Project Site	Type of Assistance
11	Approximately 330 ethnic minority boarding school students per academic year	Hien VAC System and Vocational and Livelihood Skills Training Program	Indirect support through technical assistance and new equipment or inputs (1 bandsaw, 1 radial armsaw, 1 drill press, 1 mortarizing attachment, 5 bandsaw blades, 3 armsaw blades, 20 sewing machines, consumables, infrastructure for VAC, 120 trees, 400 fish, 200 chickens, 200 ducks, 40 pigs, and 5 sows)
12	56 CEDC graduates	Ninh Thuan JSC	Follow-up training
13	39 CEDC graduates (subset of cell 12 above)	Ninh Thuan JSC	Life skills training
14	8 CEDC graduates	Ninh Thuan JSC	Additional training or job placement assistance/inputs
15	90 CEDC graduates	Binh Thuan JSC	Follow-up training
16	32 CEDC graduates (subset of cell 15 above)	Binh Thuan JSC	Life skills training
17	12 CEDC graduates	Binh Thuan JSC	Additional training or job placement assistance/inputs
18	29 CEDC graduates	Quang Ngai JSC	Life skills training
19	22 CEDC graduates (subset of cell 18 above)	Quang Ngai JSC	Follow-up training
20	6 CEDC graduates	Quang Ngai JSC	Additional training or job placement assistance/inputs
21	38 CEDC graduates	Ha Tinh JSC	Follow-up and life skills training
22	Approximately 1,900 fee-paying JSC students per academic year	Ha Tinh, Binh Thuan, Quang Ngai, Ninh Thuan JSCs	Indirect support through technical and job placement assistance, monitoring and new equipment, where necessary (32 sewing machines, 18 computers, 1 CD ROM, 5 UPS, consumables, etc)
23	Approximately 465 ethnic minority students/year	Giang and Phuoc Son Ethnic Minority Schools	Indirect support through technical assistance and monitoring
24	37 project partner staff	Ha Tinh, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Tuyen Quang and Quang Ngai JSCs	TOT in participatory learning techniques, human development, life skills and social work methodologies
25	4 WC project staff	World Concern, Hanoi and Da Nang	Continuing professional development training (4 training courses total)
26	40 ethnic minority graduates	Hoi An Accelerated Teacher's Training Program	Indirect support through informal monitoring and follow-up
27	2 social work interns	Master trainers from Youth Union Training School	Field practice, financial support, and continuing social work training
28	14 master trainers	Social Work Training Program in Hanoi	Technical, in-kind and practice support for TOT in social work education development

APPENDIX 2**Evaluation Methodology**

The Evaluation utilized the following content guidelines to assess World Concern's project objectives

- 1) A comparison of the actual accomplishments of the grant with the five program objectives contained in the Workplan submitted to USAID on September 9, 1997
- 2) An examination of the measurable outputs of the program
- 3) An examination of the program components that were successful in achieving results
- 4) An analysis of the reasons why any established goal(s) was not met
- 5) Lessons learned from this grant work, and recommendations pertinent to
 - a) Formal and community-based vocational training activities,
 - b) The next steps indicated for vocational training at each project site,
 - c) New project activities in adaptive vocational training for disabled children for the 1998 USAID DCOF grant
- 6) Conclusions and recommendations regarding policy-level activities or programs as they pertain to vocational rehabilitation and/or education in Vietnam

The Evaluation assessment strategy was two-fold. On one hand, the strategy was designed to determine the qualitative impact of project implementation, and on the other it sought a quantitative assessment of project records and documentation. More specifically, some of the key components of the Evaluation strategy included the following methodologies for assessment and analysis:

Quantitative Analysis

A quantitative assessment of the empirical data derived from Program documentation was completed. Where applicable, before and after analysis was completed between the current project outputs and lessons learned or recommendations provided in earlier grant periods. Stated program objectives from World Concern's USAID Grant Proposal dated 26 July, 1996 were compared to actual results and information from the individual, qualitative interviews discussed below. Also analyzed was the Annual Workplan submitted 26 August, 1997, and corresponding quarterly progress reports, project partner reports, site visit reports, graduate follow-up surveys, case notes, income generation summaries, and previous external project evaluations including the 1997 mid-term and the 1998 agriculture/ livestock assessment.

A note to mention here is that one of the most critical documents analyzed during the Evaluation were the results of the graduate follow-up survey completed by World Concern and project partner staff during the project period. This survey was specifically undertaken in response to concerns raised during the Mid-Term Evaluation regarding problems with monitoring and follow-up and the related difficulties in assessing project impact. Unfortunately, although the effort to address this issue was admirable, there were serious problems with missing information, the methods used in gathering the information, and in the lack of uniformity in the information collected from site to site. These problems made statistical relevancy of the collated information difficult to determine in the Final Evaluation (see attached Appendix 6).

Case studies were carried out during the Evaluation to illustrate the economic and social impact of the project initiatives on the CEDC and their families. Two of these case studies are attached in Appendix 5, entitled *Beneficiary Case Studies*. These stories serve to supplement quantitative results by qualitatively reflecting the realities of the beneficiary's situation and bringing the Evaluation findings to life.

Field Visits

The time allotted for project field visits totaled twelve days, with stops completed at a selection of old and new site areas, including Tuyen Quang, Quang Ngai, Hien, Ninh Thuan, and visits to two communes where graduates of the Hoi An Teacher Training Program are currently working. The Evaluation consultant and a small team of World Concern project staff conducted all site visits and interviews, (see attached Appendix 4, *In-Country Evaluation Schedule*).

Field visits began with initial introduction to the commune, and an overview of the project, provided by local partners or community leaders from the DOLISA, DET, CPCC or the JSC. After completing a project tour, interviews were then conducted with teachers and community workers from the DET and the Agricultural Stations. The field visits then focused on activities or meetings with the CEDCs themselves, either in groups or individually, and with their families. These meetings took place either at a centralized location (typically the JSC) or at the family home.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews provided the framework for accumulating qualitative data. The interviews were used to assess cause and effect between project objectives and actual results at various project sites. This technique emphasized guided interviewing and listening, in which only some of the questions and topics were pre-determined (see Appendix 7, *Focus Questions for Program Evaluation*). Using open-ended questions and probing topics as they arose, the interviews appeared to be informal and conversational, but were actually quite controlled and structured. New avenues of interviewing were pursued as the interviews developed.

Key informant interviews were also used to explore the opinions of the "experts" in the project. These interviews were conducted with World Concern in-country expatriate and local staff in Hanoi and Da Nang and with project partners at the provincial, district and commune levels at a variety of the project sites. Such project partner staff were either employed by the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, the Department of Education and Training, the Agricultural Promotion Centers or the local People's Committees, and included directors, vice-directors, project coordinators, principals, training instructors, scholarship and job placement administrators, and commune workers.

Interviews also included direct beneficiaries, such as scholarship students, graduates, interns, and family members (see Appendix 3, *List of Project Participants Interviewed*). The interviews generally utilized the semi-structured methodologies outlined above, focused primarily on Program impact and effectiveness, and were designed to identify any unexpected project implementation consequences, both positive or negative.

It should be noted here that at a number of project sites the key project partners did not participate in the Evaluation. This was true in Hien, Quang Ngai and Ninh Thuan. Unfortunately, the missing project partners were those who knew the most about the projects and had had the most involvement over the years. Those who did participate had limited knowledge of project status and were often unable to answer very important questions. This situation made it relatively difficult for the evaluation process to advance smoothly and resulted in many unanswered or partially answered questions. Although it is understandable that scheduling conflicts do occur occasionally, there may have been fewer if organizational efforts on the part of World Concern had been more effective.

Formal Questionnaire

A formal questionnaire was also developed specifically for application with World Concern project staff and management as a means of reflective self-evaluation. The questionnaire focused solely on lessons learned by World Concern staff during the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project-to-date (see Appendix 8, *Feedback from World Concern on Lessons Learned*). Results of the survey were directly applied in recommendations of this Evaluation report.

Participation of CEDC in Evaluation

One of the primary concerns of the Consultant during the Evaluation was the issue of ensuring participation by the CEDC themselves. Too often the direct beneficiaries, especially when they are children, are overlooked as important participants in evaluation, even though they are the key players in the project who possess the most intimate knowledge of the project's strengths and weaknesses. To prevent this oversight, specific participatory group activities were developed to solicit feedback from the CEDC directly.

Time Lines

As a starting point for group discussion with the CEDC, small groups from current or past training courses were divided up and assigned the task of developing a chronological time line of their participation in the project. Such time lines included their group's assessment of life before, during and after their involvement in the project, as well as their opinions on the best and most difficult aspects of the program. The groups were then asked to present their time lines to the entire group and collective discussion and feedback was encouraged. Given the concern that some of the CEDC

participants would be inhibited in their responses if project officials were present, the Evaluation team encouraged privacy during these activities, which was always honored. Examples of the time lines from three 1996 graduates in Quang Ngai are included in Appendix 9.

Final Briefing

During the last day of the in-country portion of the Evaluation effort, the Consultant completed a final plenary session for World Concern project staff and managers. This briefing outlined the general findings and conclusions of the Evaluation and, by way of participatory discussion, synthesized the collective impressions of the staff for future program planning and implementation.

APPENDIX 3: List of Project Participants Interviewed

Name	Position	Association	Location
Bill Kompare	Country Representative/Program Manager	World Concern	Hanoi
Phil Wilkerson	Finance Administrator/Project Coordinator	World Concern	Hanoi
To Thi Bay	Project Officer (North)	World Concern	Hanoi
Nguyen Quoc Truc	Project Officer (North)	World Concern	Hanoi
Nguyen Thi Hong Hoa	Child Specialist/Trainer	World Concern	Hanoi
Kathleen Huff	Project Coordinator (South/Central)	World Concern	Da Nang
Ngo Tri Tue	Project Officer (South/Central)	World Concern	Da Nang
Nguyen Luong Duyen	Project Officer (South/Central)	World Concern	Da Nang
Nguyen Thi Ti	Survey Interviewer (South/Central)	World Concern	Da Nang
Nguyen Trong Tien	Social Work Intern	Youth Union Training School	Hanoi
Tran Thi Anh Tuyet	Social Work Intern	Youth Union Training School	Hanoi
Tran Thi Tam	Social Work Intern	Women's Union Training School	Hanoi
Ms Huyen	DOLISA Director	DOLISA	TQ
Mr Tau	JSC Director/Project Manager	DOLISA/JSC	TQ
Mr Hoa	JSC Coordinator/Cow Bank Manager	DOLISA/JSC	TQ
Mr Lai	Provincial Coordinator (Veterinary)	APC	TQ
Ms Yen	Provincial Coordinator (Forestry)	APC	TQ
Mr Son	Provincial Coordinator (Agriculture)	APC	TQ
Ms Hoa	Teacher	JSC	TQ
Ms Ha	Teacher	JSC	TQ
Mr Thanh	Commune Worker	APC	Thai Son, TQ*
Mr Tuan	Commune Worker	APC	Thai Hoa, TQ*
Mr Thien	Commune Worker	APC	Duc Ninh, TQ*
Mr Tu	Commune Worker	APC	Thai Hoa, TQ*
	1998 Graduates (6)	JSC	TQ
	1998 Graduates (9)	Agricultural Training	TQ
	1998 Graduates and their Families (3)	Agricultural Training	TQ
	Family Microcredit Recipients (3)	Cow Bank	TQ
Mr Cuong	Deputy Director (Ka Tu)	DET	Hien
Mr Phuc	Ethnic Minority School Principle	DET	Hien
Mrs Sau	Agriculture Program/VAC Director	PC Agricultural Station	Hien
Mr Le	VAC Trainer	PC Agricultural Station	Hien
	1998 Graduates (20)	Ethnic Minority School	Hien
	1997 Graduates at home (4)	Ethnic Minority School	Hien
Miss Poloong Apo	Graduate/Teacher	Hoi An TT Program	A Ting, Hien*
Miss Hoil Tien	Graduate/Teacher	Hoi An TT Program	Hien, Hien*
Miss Bnuoch Tu	Graduate/Teacher	Hoi An TT Program	Song Con, Hien*
Miss Bnuoch Toan	Graduate/Teacher	Hoi An TT Program	A Ting, Hien*
Miss Sang	Graduate/Teacher	Hoi An TT Program	Song Con, Hien*
Mr Tuong	Vice-Director, JSC Director	DOLISA/JSC	QN**
Mr Son	Teacher	DOLISA/JSC	QN**
Mr Khoa	Job Placement Counselor	DOLISA/JSC	QN**
	1996 Graduates (3)	JSC	QN
Mr Chau	Director	DOLISA Social Protection Center	NT***
Mr Son	'Internal Relations Representative'	People's Committee	NT***
Mr Loc	Accountant	DOLISA/JSC	NT***
Mr Nam	Teacher	DOLISA/JSC	NT
Ms Hoa	Teacher	DOLISA/JSC	NT
	1996/97 Graduates (15)	JSC	NT

* = Commune

** = Trinh Minh Duc and Le Van Thai, JSC vice-directors, were not in attendance at the evaluation

*** = Phan Van Chien, JSC Director, and Tran Mai Cuong, DOLISA Director, were not in attendance at the evaluation

APPENDIX 4.
In-Country Evaluation Schedule
October 13 through November 2, 1998

DATES		ACTIVITIES
Tuesday, 13 October	4 00 pm	Arrival in Hanoi
Wednesday, 14 October	10 00 am 11 00 pm 3 30 pm 7 30 pm	Planning meeting with WC staff Work on organization of evaluation process Leave for Tuyen Quang with Phil, Truc and Dung Arrive Tuyen Quang, check-in
Thursday, 15 October	8 00 am 10 30 am 1 30 pm 4 30 pm	Meeting with DOLISA Director, Project Director, Provincial Coordinators, and JSC and commune staff at DOLISA offices Meeting at JSC with Director, Principle, staff and teachers Group activities and interviews with JSC graduates Meeting with Provincial Coordinator
Friday, 16 October	7 00 am 8 15 am 9 30 am 1 30 pm 5 00 pm 8 00 pm	Meeting at JSC with Project Director, Principle and staff, tour of JSC facilities and equipment Travel to Thai Hoa commune with provincial coordinator and APC community workers Group activities and interviews with agricultural students Home visits to cow bank families and agricultural students Return to hotel Depart for Hanoi
Sunday, 18 October	2 30 pm 5 30 pm	Depart for Da Nang Arrive Da Nang, check-in, informal meeting with Kathleen Huff, Project Coordinator for Da Nang
Monday, 19 October	5 30 am 11 00 am 1 30 pm 4 00 pm	Depart for Hien with Kathleen and Tue Arrive Hien, meeting with DET Deputy Director, School Principle, and Agricultural/VAC Program Director (APC) Group activities and interviews with 1998 agricultural training graduates Meeting with APC Trainers, tour of boarding school and VAC system
Tuesday, 20 October	7 30 am 11 00 am 1 30 am 2 30 pm 3 30 pm 4 30 pm 5 30 pm	Home visits to four 1997 graduates Tour of School facilities with Principle Follow-up meeting with School principle and DET Vice-Director Depart for Da Nang via visits to Hoi An graduates Visit to Hoi An graduates in Song Con commune Visit to Hoi An graduates in A Ting commune Depart for Da Nang

DATES	ACTIVITIES
Wednesday, 21 October 6 00 am 9 30 am 11 00 pm 1 30 pm 4 00 pm 5 00 pm 5 15 pm	Depart for Quang Ngai with Kathleen, Thi and Tue Meeting with JSC Director/DOLISA Vice-Director, job placement counselor and JSC teacher Continuing meeting with JSC teacher Group interview with three 1996 JSC graduates Meeting with job placement counselor and WC survey interviewer on follow-up survey of graduates Tour of facilities and equipment Depart for Da Nang
Thursday, 22 October 8 00 am 10 00 am 11 30 pm 6 00 pm	Work in WC Da Nang office Depart for Ninh Thuan via Nha Trang with Kathleen and Tue Arrive Nha Trang, depart for Ninh Thuan via car Arrive Ninh Thuan, check-in
Friday, 23 October 8 30 am 11 00 am 1 30 pm 4 00 pm 4 30 pm	Meeting at JSC with SPC Director, People's Committee representative, JSC accountant and JSC teacher Tour of facilities and equipment Group activities and interviews with 1997 JSC graduates Meeting with JSC teachers Depart for Nha Trang
Saturday, 24 October 2 00 pm 5 00 pm	Depart for Ha Noi with Kathleen Arrive Ha Noi
Monday, 26 October through Friday, 30 October	Work on information gathering and document review at WC Hanoi offices Meeting with Bill Kompare re project management Individual meetings with WC staff re lessons learned Group meeting with social work interns Final Evaluation briefing for WC staff
Monday, 2 November 7 45 am	Depart for Hong Kong and the US

APPENDIX 5.

Beneficiary Case Studies

The Story of Nguyen Chi Trung in Quang Ngai

Born in 1974 into a large farming family, Trung was only a few months old when he was stricken with polio. Although he survived, his right leg was severely paralyzed. This misfortune and his family's poverty have made life extremely difficult for Trung. Although he did receive some education growing up, Trung was crippled not only by his physical disability, but by the limited options he faced in his future. Since his family existed on rice farming, which required physical labor, Trung could never help to support his family enough. In fact, he viewed himself as a burden to them and to his community.

In 1994, however, Trung's luck began to change. At this time he was identified by local authorities and the Quang Ngai DOLISA as a World Concern scholarship recipient for training in industrial and domestic sewing from the Quang Ngai vocational training center. For nine months Trung lived at the VTC and learned his skill. His teachers reported that Trung was very hardworking, bright and eager to learn whatever he could in his new skill. In fact, he was so talented that he was one of the few who was sent to work for a private sewing shop in Ho Chi Minh City after he completed his training.

In many ways, this opportunity was very fortunate for Trung. But in other ways, it was also very difficult for him. Although he was able to improve his skills by working, because it was an apprentice position he was not paid for a year and he struggled to pay the 100,000 VND per month for his rent. More importantly, he was very far from his family and community and therefore from any means of emotional or social support. Trung was often homesick and discouraged. Despite these heavy obstacles, however, he continued to work very hard and to try his best.

Then, in June of 1997, World Concern visited Trung in Ho Chi Minh City and brought him his own sewing machine as start-up assistance to help him begin a shop of his own. With his new machine he was able to make two or three units of clothes per day, earning approximately 7,000 VND per unit. This only amounted to 200,000 to 300,000 VND per month, and he had to work very hard for many long hours. By the time he finished paying for his food and lodging and utilities, he had hardly anything left each month, which made him extremely frustrated and discouraged. But more than anything else, Trung did not want to be a burden on his family any longer. He was determined to stay working to support himself and to steadily improve his skills.

When World Concern again went to visit Trung in September, 1998, they discovered a significant change in him. Trung was extremely happy and optimistic, and with good reason. Through sheer determination and hard work he had been able to purchase two more sewing machines and to obtain work not only from the private shop that he began with, but from many people in the community. His skills were excellent and he was able to demand a high wage for the highly skillful work that he did. His income had increased to 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 VND per month.

Even more importantly, Trung had found happiness beyond the workplace too. He was married during the summer to the daughter of his landlord, whom he had been training in sewing. Trung and his wife now work as a team to build their sewing business and their new lives together. No longer dependent on his family, Trung is now brimming with confidence and happiness, and he has found his own place within the community in which he lives.

The Story of Da Lay Leu in Hien

Leu, who is 21 years old, is the eldest child in a large Ka Tu minority family in Hien, a mountainous region of central Vietnam. Painfully shy, Leu is disabled by a degenerative disease of the muscles. His illness has crippled both his legs and affects his spine. Mobility comes only with great assistance from others, via wheelchair or by crawling on the ground. But although Leu's body is crippled, his spirit is inspirational. One look at the beautiful drawings and sketches adorning the small shack in which the family lives provides a glimpse of the incredible talent that Leu possesses. Leu

sketches on anything he can find old newspaper, scraps of notebook paper, old magazines. He spends most of his time, which is restricted to indoors, drawing. His work offers the only bit of color in the family's one-room home and often in Leu's own life.

Leu's story is a sad one, one in which aid from World Concern has not made the impact that was intended. Leu's father, a geography teacher, and his mother, a retired teacher, have six children, all younger than Leu. The family is extremely poor, living in a dirt-floor shack with a palm-leaf roof. There are two beds for all eight family members to share. The family subsists on rice farming and the father's meager salary as a teacher. The family only has a little bit of land for farming. Fortunately, because the family is ethnic minority, the children are all able to attend school for free.

Leu, however, did not go to school until he was 13 years old because of his disability. When he did, he was placed directly into 3rd grade, which meant that Leu had to struggle to keep up. Even so, Leu was a good student and managed to get good marks. He was able to finish through the 6th grade when he was 19 years old. In fact, in part because of his ability to do well under such adverse conditions, Leu was selected as a World Concern scholarship recipient for the 1997 3-month summer course in agriculture and animal husbandry training at the Ethnic Minority Boarding School.

Unfortunately, Leu was one of the students who suffered due to the School's poor management and a political struggle for control between the local DET and the School's principal. After a delayed beginning, problems in the transfer of World Concern funds to the School prevented the VAC system from being implemented, which meant that students like Leu were given no opportunity to practice their skills directly. Additionally, Leu explained, although they learned the basics about how to raise chickens and pigs, they learned very little at all about horticulture. Further, they learned mostly theory, which was very difficult for Leu and his classmates to understand, especially in the short 3-month time frame. These problems were due largely to the poor curriculum and the teacher, who was not properly qualified to teach students with low education levels and limited experience.

The results were very discouraging for Leu and his family. After graduating from the class, Leu received 26 chickens through World Concern as a means of income generation. However, the animals were very young and susceptible to the cold, harsh conditions of the mountainous area in which the family lived. All the chickens, save for one, died very soon after Leu received them. Leu explained with dismay that he didn't know how to care for them because he didn't really understand the theory that he learned or how to apply it in his real life situation.

Since the disappointing venture with World Concern, the family has received assistance through the National Poverty Alleviation Program, which provided them with 7 large local-breed chickens and many smaller chicks. The family explained that the local breeds are preferable for families like theirs, not only because they are a sturdier breed, but because they require a cheaper feed, which fits well within their limited budget. They also received 2 pigs and 1 young cow. So far, these animals are doing well and Leu has been able to assist the family by caring for the chickens himself.

Leu explained that he loved the chance to go to the World Concern training because it meant he could learn and meet new friends. However, in terms of tangible evidence of economic improvement, there is very little. Leu's parting words to us as we left were to inform us that he would gladly leave home, would even leave his support system, if it meant he had the chance to study art his dream.

APPENDIX 6

NR = Not reported

Summary of Graduate Follow-Up Survey

Project Site	Skill Learned	Graduates Interviewed	Employed	Unemployed	Under-Employed	Further Training	Unclear Status	Employed in Skill	Avg Income per month*	Avg Income in Factories	Avg Income Outside Factories
BINH THUAN											
	sewing	59 (66%)	32 (82%)	23 (66%)	1 (13%)	1 (33%)	2 (40%)	31 (84%)	293 000	319 000	150,000
	honda repair	20 (22%)	2 (5%)	9 (26%)	6 (75%)	2 (67%)	1 (20%)	1 (3%)	220 000		
	electricity	5 (6%)	2 (5%)	2 (6%)	1 (13%)			2 (5%)	NR		
	driving	5 (6%)	3 (8%)	1 (3%)			1 (20%)	3 (8%)	300 000		
	not identified	1 (1%)					1 (20%)		NR		
Total Interviewed		90 (100%)	39 (43%)	35 (39%)	8 (9%)	3 (3%)	5 (6%)	37 (41%)	282,000	319,000	150 000
QUANG NGAI **											
	sewing	34 (58%)	18 (64%)	16 (52%)	NR	NR	6 (100%)	NR	396 000	NR	NR
	honda repair	12 (20%)	5 (18%)	7 (23%)	NR	NR		NR	250,000		
	electricity	10 (17%)	4 (14%)	6 (19%)	NR	NR		NR	375 000		
	computers & typing	3 (5%)	1 (4%)	2 (6%)	NR	NR		NR	150 000		
Total Interviewed		59 (100%)	28 (47%)	31 (53%)	NR	NR	6 (10%)	NR	359 000	NR	NR
NINH THUAN											
	sewing	50 (68%)	13 (81%)	22 (65%)	2 (100%)	NR	13 (59%)	NR	299 000	533,000	151 000
	honda repair	23 (31%)	3 (19%)	12 (35%)		NR	8 (36%)	NR	179 000		
	not identified	1 (1%)				NR	1 (5%)	NR			
Total Interviewed		74 (100%)	16 (22%)	34 (46%)	2 (3%)	NR	22 (30%)	NR	270,000	533,000	151,000
HA TINH ***											
	sewing	35 (59%)	18 (50%)		NR		17 (100%)	35 (78%)	174 000	150 000	174 000
	electricity	9 (15%)	9 (25%)	-	NR			9 (20%)	131 000		
	typing	1 (2%)	1 (3%)		NR			1 (2%)	120 000		
	not identified	14 (24%)	8 (22%)	3 (100%)	NR	3 (100%)			168 000		
Total Interviewed		59 (100%)	36 (61%)	3 (5%)	NR	3 (5%)	17 (29%)	45 (76%)	161,000	150,000	174,000
ALL SITES											
	sewing	178 (63%)	81 (68%)	61 (59%)	3 (30%)	1 (17%)	38 (76%)	66 (80%)	300,000	334 000	158 000
	honda repair	55 (20%)	10 (8%)	28 (27%)	6 (60%)	2 (33%)	9 (18%)	1 (1%)	214 000		
	electricity	24 (9%)	15 (13%)	8 (8%)	1 (10%)			11 (13%)	206 000		
	driving	5 (2%)	3 (3%)	1 (1%)			1 (2%)	3 (4%)	300 000		
	computers & typing	4 (1%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)				1 (1%)	135 000		
	not identified	16 (6%)	8 (7%)	3 (3%)		3 (50%)	2 (4%)		168,000		
GRAND TOTALS		282	119	103	10	6	50	82	266,000	334,000	158,000
		100%	42%	37%	4%	2%	18%	29%			

* Note A high number of graduates at all sites who reported an income also said they were unemployed. This could indicate that they are underemployed, rather than unemployed.

** Note Only 34 (58%) of the 59 graduates listed were actually interviewed in person. Information on the rest was gathered from friends, family or neighbors.

*** Note The information obtained from Ha Tinh did not indicate the training course taken. Therefore, only estimates (based on job activity and start up equipment) could be provided.

APPENDIX 7:

Focus Questions for Program Evaluation

For World Concern Management, Employees and Social Work Interns

- 1) Describe the project(s) that you were responsible for. What were the objectives and how did you plan and implement them? What were your difficulties in this?
- 2) Describe your working relationships with the project partners. What worked well/not so well? Why?
- 3) What are some of the best aspects of your project work and in what ways were they significant to you?
- 4) What did you learn from these positive aspects? What would you try to repeat?
- 5) What were some of the greatest challenges and difficulties that you faced during the last grant period? Why were they challenging or difficult for you?
- 6) What did you learn from these difficult experiences? What would you do differently next time?
- 7) What resources or administrative support do you still need to make your work easier? What did you receive that was helpful?

For Project Partners, including Administrators, Managers, and Community Workers

- 1) Describe the training program at your location. What are your objectives? How does it work? What is the current status? Who benefits from the project? In what ways?
- 2) What future plans do you have for providing more CEDC scholarships? Describe what these scholarships will include (i.e. how many? full or partial? criteria? process? etc.) Do you believe this project is sustainable? Why or why not?
- 3) What are the roles and responsibilities of the project staff? What government agencies are involved in the project? In what ways? How much time is spent on each project activity? Are there any time conflicts?
- 4) What equipment or additional assistance have you received from World Concern? Explain how this has helped the project. What is still needed?
- 5) What do you think about CEDC and their potential for success? Have their lives improved from this project? Why or why not? How? What is still needed?
- 6) Did you receive any additional training from World Concern? What were the best and worst aspects of this training? Was it helpful? Why or why not? How? What was missing or is still needed? Would you repeat it? Why or why not?
- 7) What are some of the best aspects of this project and in what ways were they significant?
- 8) What did you learn from these positive aspects? What would you repeat? Why?
- 9) What were some of the greatest challenges and difficulties that you faced during the last grant period? Why were they challenging or difficult for you? What did you learn from this?
- 10) What recommendations for changes or improvements would you make?

For Teachers/Trainers

- 1) How long have you been a teacher? Where did you receive training and in what specialties?
- 2) What do you teach? What other work responsibilities do you have?
- 3) What were the best aspects of the program? The worst or most difficult?
- 4) What was your impression of the CEDC students? How did they do compared to the mainstream students? What were their strengths/weaknesses? What, if any, difficulties did you face when teaching them? What difficulties do you think they face?

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- 5) What do you think is their potential for job placement after graduation? What are the barriers to this? Are they well prepared in their skills for jobs? Why or why not? Give some examples of what the graduates can do or make with their new skills
- 6) Did you have the resources and administrative support you required to properly train the students? If not, what was missing?
- 7) Did you participate in any additional training through your employer or through World Concern? If so, describe it and what you thought of it. Do you think you could use additional training? What kind?
- 8) What recommendations for changes or improvements would you make?

For CEDC Students, Graduates, Hoi An Teacher's Training Graduates and Families

- 1) What was your life like before you began participating in the program? What is it like now?
- 2) What was the best aspect of the program?
- 3) What was the worst or most difficult aspect of the program? What could have made it better?
- 4) How did you feel/what was your life like when you first began the program? in the middle? at the end? after finishing? when you began your job? now?
- 5) What difficulties do you still face? What do you hope to do about them?
- 6) What training did you receive? What did you learn? Was it useful? Why or why not?
- 7) If you have graduated, do you now have a job or are you working? What do you do? Does it relate to the skill that you learned during the program? If not, why?
- 8) Do you have any income? What is it? If you are working but don't have an income, why not? How much more or less is your income than before you began the program (or is it the same)?
- 9) If you now have a job or apprenticeship, what do you think of it? What is good and/or bad about it? Do you like it or want to continue? Why or why not?
- 10) Did you receive additional assistance or inputs from World Concern? What was this? Has it been helpful to you? In what way(s)?
- 11) If you received livestock or horticultural inputs, what is their condition now? Why do you think you had trouble or had success?
- 12) Who in the family cares for the animals or the trees now? What are the responsibilities?
- 13) How often do the community workers visit you at home? What do they help you with? How often does a vet come to inspect your animals?
- 14) Describe your family situation
 - ♦ How many are in the family? How many of these are income earners? How many are children?
 - ♦ How many months per year do you have food shortages?
 - ♦ What are your primary means of income generation? What are your family's resources?
 - ♦ Do the school-age children go to school?
 - ♦ Do you receive assistance from anywhere else? If so, from whom and what does this include?
 - ♦ What kind of progress, if any, has the family made since participating in the program?
- 15) What are your hopes and your plans for the future?
- 16) What recommendations for changes or improvements would you make?

APPENDIX 8:

Feedback from World Concern on Lessons Learned

1 Training for CEDC

- ♦ Sincere efforts that were made to focus training efforts as close as possible to where young people were based. World Concern attempted to create a "hands-on" training program based on the support and commitment of people at the commune level. To witness the initial stages and potential of such a concept is rewarding.
- ♦ The agricultural training for ethnic minority children was a great aspect of the program because these skills are very appropriate to local communities.
- ♦ The agricultural training was an excellent part of the program because it is adaptive, it provides a means for generating income after training, and the inputs provide a good way to practice skills and to improve the living conditions of CEDC.
- ♦ World Concern should continue the opportunities for CEDC to participate in suitable/adaptive vocational training.
- ♦ We found that the agricultural training model is suitable to the educational level of the students, especially when combined with supportive written information appropriate to their needs.
- ♦ Because families of the minority students survive via farming, the agricultural training was very valuable and suitable to the needs of these target groups.
- ♦ Training in agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as the VAC model of development should be repeated.

2 Job Placement and Income Generation for Students

- ♦ Vocational training must be directly attached to job placement when assisting CEDC.
- ♦ Placing children in jobs when they're too young didn't work well.
- ♦ We had no control over the job placement. We had to totally depend on the project partner for this. We got stuck in this area.
- ♦ It is difficult for a PVO and a government counterpart (even if they are the Department of Labor) in a country with under and unemployment to remove young people from their communities and seek to place them in jobs elsewhere. However, by involving local communities and local employers, if they exist, the chances of finding a relevant means to increase a participant's livelihood is much greater.
- ♦ One difficulty was coming to terms with promises that could not be fulfilled. This relates to the promise of continuous employment for the students who took vocational sewing classes.
- ♦ Even signed, written documents guaranteeing employment for participants do not change the fact that there are very few jobs available in rural areas in Vietnam.
- ♦ There is a need for a clear vision of job placement opportunities prior to providing vocational training.
- ♦ The ideas of some income generation projects are not always appropriate to the students.

3 Community-Based Project Components

- ♦ World Concern should repeat efforts to focus training at the grassroots level and to expand it to include their own staff.
- ♦ World Concern should definitely repeat the community-based training, but with an even greater emphasis on training-of-trainers and follow-up training for participants. They should also repeat the life skills training workshops for counterparts and participants.
- ♦ There is great importance in working directly with the target beneficiaries (especially the kids) when implementing the projects to achieve success.
- ♦ The key is to work more closely at the grassroots level with people who live there, who are the greatest stakeholders, and therefore care the most about the kids and in seeing the project succeed. This doesn't often happen through DOLISA directives.
- ♦ The fact that our projects can reach the beneficiaries directly is critical. The kids can be involved in the projects and the activities can help them realize their own important roles in their lives. The programs provide an important support mechanism, which encourages CEDC to go on with their own lives. These efforts were significant because the project aims to help CEDC to be able to integrate into their communities, and to reduce the difficulties in their lives. These aspects have met our aims.
- ♦ I would try to repeat the community-based training and the cow bank programs.

4 Income Generation for Families The Cow Bank

- ♦ The cow bank was one of the best aspects. Although the cow bank is new, there are obvious benefits that have been proved by other similar projects. Some of these include: a) the short-term nature in cow reproduction so that in about a year the family has a cow (property) of their own, b) the families receive a lot of individual encouragement from the community workers, which gives them a sense of empowerment, and most importantly, c) the poorest of the poor can benefit from this project, unlike the situation with the Bank of the Poor and other credit programs which refuse to provide credit to those with no collateral.
- ♦ The cow bank has merit, but is yet unproved by World Concern.

5 Income Generation for Project Partners

- ♦ The number of the animals for JSC income generation was so large that we had trouble finding enough land for them.
- ♦ So far, the VAC system hasn't yielded as much income as we expected.
- ♦ The implementation of the VAC system was very important as an income generation and training practice tool.

6 Hoi An Accelerated Teacher's Training Program

- ♦ The Teacher's Training Program for ethnic minority students at Hoi An Residential School is considered to be an important model. It is the quickest way to train the teachers from mountainous, ethnic regions where the shortage of teachers is obvious. The sustainability of the model is also important.
- ♦ Regarding the Hoi An Teacher's Training Program, we didn't touch the curriculum because it was compulsory, but the school, the DET, the teachers and especially the students were all very devoted and responsible. This is worth repeating.

7 Social Work Training

- ♦ One of the most successful components of the training for CEDC in our program has been the social aspect.
- ♦ The social work and life skills workshops were very good. They served to equip the JSC staff and graduates with social work education and practical skills.
- ♦ We should highlight social work training more because its specific usefulness for developing local capacity for practical application of project objectives in the communities, especially with kids, has become very clear.
- ♦ The social development input during this grant period was different than what was initially anticipated. However, it worked very positively. The workshops conducted by the Child Specialist and the social work interns were highly praised by all who attended and observed. How to quantify these results is, however, difficult.
- ♦ The life skills workshops and the follow-up were very important aspects in our work. Also, it is important to get to know the students through personal contact.
- ♦ The life skills workshops was an very important program component, as was meeting and getting to know the students as individuals.
- ♦ Through the life skills training and follow-up with graduates I learned a lot regarding my own understanding of young people and how to implement new concepts of direct work with children. Even after a very short time this work has become my passion.
- ♦ The life skills training was one of the best aspects because we didn't depend on others (i.e. the project partners) to implement it as we had for other aspects of our project. This time we did it ourselves and worked to develop the potential for creating forums for regular life skills training for the kids in the future.
- ♦ The usefulness of combining economic and social inputs when working with marginalized young people was reinforced through the life skills training workshops.
- ♦ Training for CEDC should be relevant to their existing life situation and should involve their surrounding communities.
- ♦ The community-based training should definitely be repeated, but with even greater emphasis on training-of-trainers and follow-up training sessions for participants. In conjunction with this, the life skills training should be repeated for beneficiaries and counterparts.
- ♦ In the implementation of social work training for project partners I witnessed changes in attitude, knowledge and behavior in each trainee.
- ♦ My lack of certain professional skills made it hard for me at times. These difficulties included English language, evaluation and monitoring techniques, report writing, etc.

8 Monitoring and Follow-Up

- ♦ Follow-up with the graduates was very important because it meant that we could determine the situation with the students and the results of the JSC training. We could also provide assistance where needed and re-evaluate the quality of the training (for example, for successful training a good needs assessment is very important)
- ♦ It is critical to gather baseline data on potential students (i.e. education levels, abilities, desires, status of local job market, etc.) prior to their selection and prior to the development of the JSC training curriculum
- ♦ We could only base our evaluation of the student's achievements on the educational results provided by the school. It made it hard.
- ♦ There is a need for pre-agreed mechanisms for assessing the level of achievement from the training among teachers, WCDO, specialists and project partners (regular testing and evaluation)
- ♦ In the implementation of the VAC techniques we had no means for testing effectiveness of training and the knowledge of agricultural skill implementation
- ♦ Follow-up should be repeated, especially in 1) gathering of baseline data and the survey of children before training, 2) social work and life skills training, 3) improving knowledge about the labor market and job placement realities before training
- ♦ Because the project was near Da Nang and was therefore easy to monitor and follow-up, it wasn't very difficult for me. This logistical aspect should be repeated.
- ♦ WC lacked a continuous project site presence. We tried (with the agricultural specialist) to have a technician based permanently in Tuyen Quang, but were unsuccessful. Travelling from Hanoi with basically project management personnel was inadequate.
- ♦ In order to ensure that the JSCs do their part, World Concern must keep in constant contact with them.

9 Logistics

- ♦ Because our projects are often established in the highland areas or in areas very far from us, they are often inaccessible or cause difficulties in reaching the beneficiaries' homes or project sites
- ♦ Transportation issues often caused problems
- ♦ The locations of the projects were extremely difficult and often near impossible. Students lived far from the primary training location, the weather was difficult, work schedules conflicted - all this combined to make follow-up hard.

10 Time Constraints

- ♦ With no doubt the greatest difficulty was the time constraint. The first 6 months of the project was spent on modifying the project design, building trust, planning implementation, etc. and not simply racing into a situation where your main partner proved to have little knowledge or appreciation for what was to be achieved. By the time World Concern moved through this level of involvement, which in the end strengthened the operating partnership, only then could the implementing phase begin. Twelve months on, the project in Tuyen Quang has established a good foundation on which to build, not terminate.
- ♦ Changes in Vietnamese society depend on a step-by-step process, which requires a long-term commitment.
- ♦ The time pressures were very difficult because we needed more time to see our projects really begin working. If the project life is too short it will be very hard to see the long-term effectiveness of the project. This contributes to our difficulties in assessing the overall project results except for the short-term programs. For long term programs we can only estimate the impact based on very modest results achieved.

11 Working with Project Partners

- ♦ In some JSCs there are some staff who can help a lot with information gathering and project activities. We need to spend more time talking and working with them.
- ♦ There must be cooperation and responsibilities on all sides and the project must meet the needs of the beneficiaries.
- ♦ We need to work more closely with our project partners in order to make them more involved in our projects. We can do this by having them contribute more initiative and ideas during the program development and implementation.
- ♦ Our relationships with our project partners are an extremely important aspect of our program. These relationships depend on two things: A) who you choose as a partner and B) how you establish the relationship. **Relating to A:** as foreign PVOs we have no choice in selecting our project partners - this is an unavoidable risk when working in Vietnam (it's more the luck of the draw). But who we work with from the district DOLISA is critical as it

relates to leadership in the project and the influence that they have on local implementation. Relating to B, we have a chance in the new grant to diversify our project partners somewhat by using co-partners (i.e. the Red Cross) in commune application of our objectives. If World Concern can encourage these co-partners to share their true opinions and thoughts on the program, we have the chance for more success. But if they are formally "yes men" of the DOLISA and actually disagree with them behind the scenes, we will have problems in implementation.

- ♦ Maintaining good relationships with our project partners requires a basis of trust and belief in each other. It's better to try to encourage them and have faith in them rather than always questioning their motives.
- ♦ The government system, which uses an extremely political, top-down approach in project implementation, sometimes forced us to try to determine how to get around it - this made the work difficult.
- ♦ We were not permitted to work directly with the JSCs, but had to go through DOLISA. DOLISA does not really participate in project activities, but controls the administration of the programs. This made implementation difficult.
- ♦ Initiatives are often limited by complicated procedures of different government partners.
- ♦ Culture plays a critical role in project development. This means we have to adapt our programs to the grassroots level and we need more participation from project partners in project development. Much of Vietnamese culture is displayed in interactions (relationships) and verbal communication, rather than written communication.
- ♦ It is important to determine the availability of project partner administrators prior to beginning the program.
- ♦ There were troubles with government personnel that affected our program, such as corruption, battles for control, nepotism, etc.
- ♦ Communication between the various government partners, different hierarchical levels, and their complicated financial and administrative procedures made some project activities difficult, if not impossible.
- ♦ Project partner administrators were often absent and we had lots of difficulties getting things done due to JSC procrastination.
- ♦ The building of good relationships with project partners and beneficiaries, especially the students, is critical to program success.

APPENDIX 9: 1996 JSC Graduate Timeline

Graduate Backgrounds

Hai ("H") 25 years old, electricity training, finished 9th grade

Duc ("D") 23 years old, cleft palate, domestic/industrial sewing training, finished 9th grade

Vu ("V") 22 years old, mobility impairment, domestic/industrial sewing training, finished 9th grade

Life before Project Participation	Start of Project	About 1 month into Training	Middle of Training	Right after Graduation	Arrival in HCMC or Begin Further Training	After 1 Year in HCMC	Return to Quang Ngai/Begin work at Hotel	Life Now
<p>All Family livelihood = farming low family income average 3 mos food shortage</p> <p>D Had quit school because family needed him to work to help, had dreams of becoming artist</p> <p>H Quit school re family had no \$, no food, siblings quit school (7th grade), as oldest had to help support family by working in HCMC wherever could find work, had no hopes</p> <p>V Wanted to finish school, but Quit when heard of</p>	<p>All Very happy to begin, had lot of hope, only a bit worried, felt strange because</p> <p>D wondered if would be able to get job</p> <p>H was older than others & felt awkward</p> <p>V worried if would learn enough skills</p>	<p>D Teachers work-hard, were nice, skill seemed good for me, but frustrated because wanted to learn more</p> <p>H Thought skill chosen was good for me but felt what I was taught was too little for what I needed to work in real world facilities were also not adequate</p> <p>V Feel the same as Duc, also had difficulties with calculating measurements & making patterns compared to other tailors</p>	<p>D Training became easier, liked it a lot wanted to learn more but when learned I d go to HCMC I was afraid to leave family & to live far away</p> <p>H Classes got easier and I liked the skill, but I learned it was a very difficult one to become good at my difficulties were in both theory & practice</p> <p>I wanted to learn more though</p> <p>V Was happy to learn I d go to HCM, classes were a bit easier, but was still worried my skills weren't good enough</p>	<p>D I wasn't skilled enough to work at private shop so I went to city to work I considered the placement a job/apprenticeship</p> <p>H I didn't have skills I needed yet so request further training at another school that could teach more, JSC agreed and sent me</p> <p>V I had a 2 month waiting period before going to HCMC I really missed my friends and teachers from the JSC</p>	<p>D I was very sad & homesick, I only did very simple work at the factory & didn't learn any new skills there income was very low and had to manage on my own</p> <p>H I learned more skills in new training which was good, but my life was still difficult I learned theory & practice, but still had far to go before I reached the level I needed for a job</p> <p>V Work was easy, I was always sad & bored because work was too simple, we helped each other, rarely got paid, which was very hard</p>	<p>D I realized I needed to move on to a different skill cause I had no more hope I still had not received further training to improve my skills & my income was still the same, work depended on the demand of the factory</p> <p>V I felt the same as Duc we had no rights/power to change the situation Mr Son visited the first month, then sometimes my teachers visited after that</p>	<p>D Life became better for me I began work at a private shop w/ relatives, had very good training there</p> <p>H Began work at a hotel cause didn't have enough skills to work for myself it was very strange & didn't know how to interact w/ customers, I had to be trained again but life became better</p> <p>V At first I just stayed at home, but then went for more training in electricity at a private shop, I saw no future in sewing</p>	<p>D I still want to open a shop life's more comfortable now I earn the same as in HCMC but now learn more skills</p> <p>H Life s okay for me now, but I'm not using my skills which is what I want to do</p> <p>V I now see a future in electricity my skills in this area are okay, but I lack capital to start my own shop, I don't have any income yet</p>